

EL902647327 US

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT

\* \* \* \* \*

Semiconductor Processing Workpiece Support With  
Sensory Subsystem for Detection of Wafers or  
Other Semiconductor Workpieces

\* \* \* \* \*

INVENTOR

Kyle M. Hanson

4492P1022US

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO. ~~SE10-0110~~  
~~(97-0024)~~

1                   Fig. 1 is an environmental view of the semiconductor processing  
2                   head of the present invention showing two processing heads in a  
3                   processing station, one in a deployed, "closed" or "processing" position,  
4                   and one in an "open" or "receive wafer" position.

5                   Fig. 2 is an isometric view of the semiconductor processing head  
6                   of the present invention.

7                   Fig. 3 is a side elevation view of the processing head of the  
8                   present invention showing the head in a "receive wafer" position.

9                   Fig. 4 is a side elevation view of the processing head of Fig. 2  
10                  showing the head in a rotated position ready to lower the wafer into  
11                  the processing station.

12                  Fig. 5 is a side elevation view of the processing head of Fig. 2  
13                  showing the head operator pivoted to deploy the processing head and  
14                  wafer into the bowl of the processing station.

15                  Fig. 6 is a schematic front elevation view of the processing head  
16                  indicating the portions detailed in Figs. 7 and 8.

17                  Fig. 7 is a front elevation sectional view of the left half of the  
18                  processing head of the apparatus of the present invention also showing  
19                  a first embodiment of the wafer holding fingers.

20                  Fig. 8 is a front elevation sectional view of the left half of the  
21                  processing head of the apparatus of the present invention also showing  
22                  a first embodiment of the wafer holding fingers.

1                   Fig. 9 is an isometric view of the operator base and operator  
2                   arm of the apparatus of the present invention with the protective cover  
3                   removed.

4                   Fig. 10 is a right side elevation view of the operator arm of the  
5                   present invention showing the processing head pivot drive mechanism.

6                   Fig. 11 is a left side elevation view of the operator arm of the  
7                   present invention showing the operator arm drive mechanism.

8                   Fig. 12 is schematic plan view of the operator arm indicating the  
9                   portions detailed in Figs. 13 and 14.

10                  Fig. 13 is a partial sectional plan view of the right side of the  
11                  operator arm showing the processing head drive mechanism.

12                  Fig. 14 is a partial sectional plan view of the left side of the  
13                  operator arm showing the operator arm drive mechanism.

14                  Fig. 15 is a side elevational view of a semiconductor workpiece  
15                  holder constructed according to a preferred aspect of the invention.

16                  Fig. 16 is a front sectional view of the Fig. 1 semiconductor  
17                  workpiece holder.

18                  Fig. 17 is a top plan view of a rotor which is constructed in  
19                  accordance with a preferred aspect of this invention, and which is taken  
20                  along line 3-3 in Fig. 16.

21                  Fig. 18 is an isolated side sectional view of a finger assembly  
22                  constructed in accordance with a preferred aspect of the invention and  
23                  which is configured for mounting upon the Fig. 17 rotor.

1       Fig. 19 is a side elevational view of the finger assembly of  
2       Fig. 18.

3       Fig. 20 is a fragmentary cross-sectional enlarged view of a finger  
4       assembly and associated rotor structure.

5       Fig. 21 is a view taken along line 7-7 in Fig. 4 and shows a  
6       portion of the preferred finger assembly moving between an engaged  
7       and disengaged position.

8       Fig. 22 is a view of a finger tip of the preferred finger assembly  
9       and shows an electrode tip in a retracted or disengaged position (solid  
10      lines) and an engaged position (phantom lines) against a semiconductor  
11      workpiece.

12      Fig. 23 is a sectional view showing a second embodiment  
13      semiconductor processing station having a workpiece support assembly  
14      and a plating station bowl assembly.

15      Fig. 24 is an enlarged sectional view similar to Fig. 23 showing  
16      only portions of the workpiece support.

17      Fig. 25 is an exploded perspective view of portions of the  
18      workpiece support shown in Fig. 24.

19      Fig. 26 is an exploded perspective view of portions of a rotor  
20      assembly forming part of the workpiece support shown in Fig. 24.

21      Fig. 27 is a perspective view showing an interior face of the rotor  
22      assembly.

23      Fig. 28 is a perspective view showing the interior face of the  
24      rotor assembly with a wafer supported thereon.

1      Fig. 29 is an enlarged perspective view showing an actuator  
2      transmission which mounts on the rotor assembly and controls motion  
3      of workpiece-engaging fingers.

4      Fig. 30 is an exploded perspective assembly view of the actuator  
5      transmission shown in Fig. 29.

6      Fig. 31 is a longitudinal sectional view of the actuator transmission  
7      shown in Fig. 29.

8      Fig. 32 is a longitudinal sectional view of one preferred form of  
9      electrode assembly which can be used in the second embodiment  
10     processing system.

11     Fig. 33 is a longitudinal sectional view of one preferred form of  
12     electrode assembly which can be used in the second embodiment  
13     processing system.

14     Fig. 34 is a longitudinal sectional view of one preferred form of  
15     electrode assembly which can be used in the second embodiment  
16     processing system.

17     Fig. 35 is a longitudinal sectional view of one preferred form of  
18     electrode assembly which can be used in the second embodiment  
19     processing system.

20     Fig. 36 is a longitudinal sectional view of one preferred form of  
21     electrode assembly which can be used in the second embodiment  
22     processing system.

Fig. 37 is a sectional view showing an enlarged distal tip portion of a further electrode before being pre-conditioned in accordance with another aspect of the invention.

Fig. 38 is a sectional view showing the enlarged distal tip portion of the previous figure after being pre-conditioned.

Fig. 39 is a longitudinal sectional view of one preferred form of electrode assembly which can be used in the second embodiment processing system.

Fig. 40 is a sectional view showing the electrode assembly of Fig. 39 in position ready to engage a semiconductor workpiece.

Fig. 41 is a sectional view showing the electrode assembly of Fig. 39 in an engaged position with a semiconductor workpiece.

Fig. 42 is a longitudinal sectional view showing the plating station bowl shown in Fig. 23.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

This disclosure of the invention is submitted in furtherance of the constitutional purposes of the U.S. Patent Laws "to promote the progress of science and useful arts" (Article 1, Section 8).

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
TABLE 13  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
Listing of Subsections of Detailed Description and  
Pertinent Items with Reference Numerals and Page Numbers

Workpiece Support .....	11	rotate belt tensioner 439 .....	18
· semiconductor processing machine 400	11	tensioner hub 468 .....	18
workpiece supports 401 .....	11	processing head shaft bearing 440 ..	18
Workpiece support 402 .....	11	processing head rotate bearing 469 ..	18
Workpiece support 403 .....	11	processing head shaft bearing 441 ..	18
semiconductor manufacturing chamber		cable brackets 442 and 443 .....	19
404 .....	11	rotate overtravel protect 444 .....	19
beam emitter 81 .....	11	rotate flag 447 .....	20
operator base 405 .....	11	Rotate optical switches 445 and 446 ..	20
processing head 406 .....	11		
operator arm 407 .....	11	Operator Arm-Lift Mechanism .....	20
wafer holder 408 .....	11	operator arm lift mechanism 448 .....	20
fingers 409 .....	11	lift motor shaft 454 .....	21
Workpiece holder 408 .....	11	lift gear drive 453 .....	21
workpiece spin axis 410 .....	11	lift drive shaft 456 .....	21
process pivot axis 411 .....	11	lift bushing 449 .....	21
operator pivot axis 412 .....	12	anchor plate 458 .....	21
workpiece <i>W</i> .....	12	anchor fasteners 457 .....	21
fingertips 414 .....	12	Lift bearing 450 .....	21
processing bowl 417 .....	12	lift bearing support 460 .....	22
left and right forks 418 and 419 .....	13	operator arm frame 461 .....	22
		lift anchor 451 .....	22
Operator Base .....	14	lift overtravel protect 462 .....	22
operator base back portion 420 .....	14	lift optical switch low 463 .....	23
operator base left yoke arm 421 .....	14	lift optical switch high 464 .....	23
operator base right yoke arm 422 .....	14	lift flag 465 .....	23
yoke arm fasteners 423 .....	14	lift motor encoder 455 .....	23
operator arm bearings 424 .....	14	lift motor 452 .....	23
operator arm 425 .....	14	slotted lift flag mounting slots 467 ..	23
		lift flag fasteners 466 .....	23
Operator Arm .....	14		
process arm rear cavity 426 .....	15	Processing Head .....	24
lift motor 452 .....	15	processing head housing 470 .....	24
rotate motor 428 .....	15	circumferential grooves 471 .....	24
processing head left pivot shaft 429 ..	15	rotate shaft openings 474 and 475 ..	24
processing head right pivot shaft 430 ..	15	left and right processing head mounts	
		472 .....	24
Operator Arm-Processing Head Rotate		processing head door 476 .....	24
Mechanism .....	15	processing head void 477 .....	25
Processing head rotate mechanism 431	16		
rotate shaft 432 .....	16	Processing Head Spin Motor .....	25
securing collar 433 .....	16	workpiece holder 478 .....	25
rotate motor support 434 .....	16	spin axis 479 .....	25
rotate encoder 435 .....	16	spin motor 480 .....	26
rotate pulley inboard bearing 436 ..	17	top motor housing 481 .....	26
rotate belt 437 .....	17	spin motor shaft 483 .....	26
processing head pulley 438 .....	17	workpiece holder rotor 484 .....	26

1	rotor hub 485 .....	26	angled slot 832a .....	38
2	rotor hub recess 486 .....	26	finger assembly frame outer flange 834 .....	38
3	workpiece shaft snap-ring 488 .....	26	inner drive plate portion 836 .....	38
4	rotor recess groove 489 .....	26	 	
5	spin encoder 498 .....	27	Finger Assembly Drive System .....	38
6	optical tachometer 499 .....	27	bearing 838 .....	39
7	 		collet 840 .....	39
8	Processing Head Finger Actuators .....	29	bearing receptacle 839 .....	39
9	Pneumatic piston 502 .....	30	spring 842 .....	39
10	actuator spring 505 .....	30	spring seat 844 .....	39
11	cavity end cap 507 .....	30	 	
12	retaining ring 508 .....	30	Finger Assembly Electrical System .....	40
13	pneumatic inlet 503 .....	30	pin connector 846 .....	40
14	pneumatic supply line 504 .....	30	finger 848 .....	40
15	actuator plate 509 .....	30	nut 850 .....	40
16	actuator plate connect screw 510 .....	30	anti-rotation pin 852 .....	40
17	Wave springs 529 .....	30	finger tip 854 .....	41
18	bushing 512 .....	30	electrode contact 858 .....	41
19	pneumatic piston recess 511 .....	30	 	
20	finger actuator contacts 513 .....	31	Finger Assembly Drive System Interface .....	41
21	 		finger actuator 862 .....	41
22	Processing Head Workpiece Holder .....	31	actuation ring 863 .....	42
23	finger actuator lever 514 .....	31	first movement path axis 864 .....	42
24	finger stem 515 .....	32	secondary linkage 865 .....	42
25	finger diaphragm 519 .....	32	link arm 867 .....	42
26	workpiece holder rotor 484 .....	32	actuator torque ring 869 .....	42
27	finger opening 521 .....	32	pneumatic operator 871 .....	42
28	rotor diaphragm lip 523 .....	32	 	
29	finger spring 520 .....	32	Engaged and Disengaged Positions .....	43
30	finger actuator tab 522 .....	32	arrow A .....	44
31	finger collar or nut 517 .....	32	workpiece standoff 865 .....	44
32	shoulder 518 .....	32	bend 866 .....	45
33	finger actuator mechanism 500 .....	33	 	
34	cavity 501 .....	33	Finger Assembly Seal .....	45
35	 		seal 868 .....	45
36	Semiconductor Workpiece Holder -		rim portion 870 .....	45
37	Electroplating Embodiment .....	33	 	
38	semiconductor workpiece holder 810 ..	33	Methods and Operation .....	47
39	bottom half or bowl 811 .....	34	 	
40	 		Second Embodiment Processing Station -	
41	Processing Head and Processing Head		Generally .....	52
42	Operator .....	34	second semiconductor processing station	
43	workpiece support 812 .....	34	900 .....	52
44	spin head assembly 814 .....	34	workpiece support assembly 901 .....	53
45	lift/rotate assembly 816 .....	34	processing bowl 917 .....	53
46	motor 818 .....	35	processing or manufacturing chamber	
47	rotor 820 .....	35	904 .....	53
48	rotor spin axis 822 .....	35	 	
49	finger assembly 824 .....	36	Workpiece Support Generally .....	53
50	actuator 825 .....	36	rotor assembly 984 .....	53
51	rotor center piece 826 .....	36	 	
52	spokes 828 .....	36	Workpiece Support Head Operator .....	53
53	rotor perimeter piece 830 .....	36	processing head 906 .....	53
54	 		head operator 907 .....	53
55	Finger Assembly .....	37	upper portion 908 .....	53
56	finger assembly frame 832 .....	38	head connection shaft 909 .....	53

1	horizontal pivot axis 910 . . . . .	53	workpiece standoff supports 721 . . . . .	63
2	Workpiece Support Main Part . . . . .	54	finger actuator transmission 960 . . . . .	64
	processing head housing 970 . . . . .	54	finger head mounting receptacle 954 . . . . .	64
3	processing head frame 982 . . . . .	54	locking pin groove 955 . . . . .	64
4	door plate 983 . . . . .	54	finger mounting pin 956 . . . . .	64
5	door ring member 984 . . . . .	54	transmission base 961 . . . . .	64
6	frame-pivot shaft connection 985 . . . . .	54	mounting cutout 962 . . . . .	64
7	pivot shaft connection base 935 . . . . .	55	transmission shaft 963 . . . . .	65
8	first housing part 971 . . . . .	55	shaft channel or groove 964 . . . . .	65
9	housing cap 972 . . . . .	55	shaft camming control member 965 . . . . .	65
10	main part mechanism chamber 973 . . . . .	55	ball 966 . . . . .	65
11	peripheral groove 986 . . . . .	55	ball support fastener 967 . . . . .	65
12	inflatable door seal 987 . . . . .	55	interior shaft passageway 968 . . . . .	65
	annular rotor receiving groove 988 . . .	55	spring retainer 969 . . . . .	65
13	Workpiece Support Rotor Drive . . . . .	56	finger mounting spring 938 . . . . .	65
	workpiece spin motor 980 . . . . .	56	set screw 939 . . . . .	66
14	stator armatures 916 . . . . .	56	transmission head 656 . . . . .	66
15	motor shaft 918 . . . . .	56	bearing 657 . . . . .	66
16	bottom motor bearing 921 . . . . .	56	head pieces 658 and 659 . . . . .	66
17	bottom motor housing 922 . . . . .	56	head fasteners 660 . . . . .	66
18	top motor housing 923 . . . . .	56	head guide rods 661 . . . . .	66
19	top motor bearing 927 . . . . .	56	two guide passageways 662 . . . . .	66
20	fasteners 924 . . . . .	57	head bias springs 664 . . . . .	66
21	frame extensions 925 . . . . .	57	shaft seal 667 . . . . .	66
	top frame piece 926 . . . . .	57	transmission head depression ring 683 . .	66
22	Workpiece Support Rotor Assembly . . . . .	57	operator output connection ring 684 . .	66
	rotor assembly 930 . . . . .	57	pneumatic actuator engines 691 . . . . .	67
23	rotor shaft 931 . . . . .	57	pneumatic manifolds 692 . . . . .	67
24	rotor shaft hub 932 . . . . .	57	Electrode Fingers With Submerged	
	shaft hub receptacle 933 . . . . .	57	Conductive Current Transfer Areas . . . . .	67
25	inner rotor part 934 . . . . .	57	finger assembly 631 . . . . .	67
26	inner rotor part hub 935 . . . . .	57	finger shaft 632 . . . . .	67
27	peripheral band 936 . . . . .	57	finger head 633 . . . . .	67
28	snap-ring 937 . . . . .	57	locking pin 956 . . . . .	67
29	transmission receptacles 937 . . . . .	57	dielectric sheathing 634 and 635 . . . . .	68
30	fasteners 941 . . . . .	58	contact head 636 . . . . .	68
31	rotor face panel 943 . . . . .	58	contact face 637 . . . . .	68
32	apertures 787 . . . . .	58	submersion line 639 . . . . .	68
33	support standoffs 721 . . . . .	58	first electrically conductive segment 642 .	68
34	workpiece peripheral guide pins 722 . .	58	second electrically conductive segment	
35	reinforcing ribs 942 . . . . .	58	643 . . . . .	68
36	side wall 944 . . . . .	58	third electrically conductive segment 644 .	69
37	finger passageways 949 . . . . .	59	third dielectric segment 653 . . . . .	69
38	rotor shaft mounting nut 888 . . . . .	59	third dielectric sheath 654 . . . . .	69
39	angular position encoder 498 . . . . .	59	distal contact insert part 655 . . . . .	70
40	Workpiece Detection Subsystem . . . . .	60	insert receptacle 616 . . . . .	70
41	mounting 738 . . . . .	61	contact face 617 . . . . .	70
42	detector 739 . . . . .	61	electrode finger 979 . . . . .	70
43	workpiece detector windows 741 . . . .	61	dielectric sheath 621 . . . . .	70
44	Workpiece Support Finger Actuator . . . . .	63	Electrode Fingers With Dielectric Sheaths	
	finger pivot axes 953 . . . . .	63	Covering Submerged Areas . . . . .	72
			electrode finger 681 . . . . .	72
			dielectric sheath 682 . . . . .	72
			contact insert side walls 619 . . . . .	72

1	insert contact part or tip 655 .....	72
2	Pre-Conditioning of Electrode Contact	
3	Faces .....	73
4	electrode 614 .....	73
5	distal exposed surface 615 .....	73
6	dielectric sheath 616 .....	74
7	Methods Using Workpiece-Engaging	
8	Electrode Assembly With Sealing Boot	75
9	electrode finger 583 .....	75
10	electrode shaft 584 .....	75
11	head 633 .....	75
12	cover or boot 585 .....	75
13	distal contact lip 586 .....	76
14	contact insert part 655 .....	76
15	skirt-portion 587 .....	76
16	electrode shaft distal end surface 588 .....	76
17	contact face 617 .....	76
18	substrate or other subjacent layer 561 .....	76
19	thin metallic seed layer 562 .....	76
20	via or other opening 563 .....	76
21	photoresist layer 564 .....	76
22	Plating Bowl Assembly .....	79
23	electroplating bowl assembly 303 .....	79
24	process bowl or plating vessel 316 .....	79
25	outer bowl side wall 617 .....	79
26	bowl bottom 319 .....	79
27	bowl rim assembly 314 .....	79
28	cup assembly 320 .....	79
29	fluid cup portion 321 .....	79
30	cup side 322 .....	79
31	cup bottom 323 .....	79
32	flutes 372 .....	79
33	cup main joint 387 .....	80
34	riser tube 361 .....	80
35	fitting 362 .....	80
36	fluid inlet line 325 .....	80
37	bowl bottom opening 327 .....	80
38	cup fluid inlet openings 324 .....	80
39	overflow chamber 345 .....	80
40	level detectors 351 and 352 .....	81
41	diffuser height adjustment mechanisms	
42	386 .....	82
43	mounting fasteners 389 .....	82
44	Plating Anode Shield .....	82
45	anode shield 393 .....	82
46	anode shield fasteners 394 .....	82

\* \* \* (End of Table 1) \* \* \*

1      Workpiece Support

2      Turning now to Fig. 1, a semiconductor processing machine 400  
3      having two workpiece supports 401 is shown. Workpiece support 402  
4      is shown in a "open" or "receive wafer" position in order to receive a  
5      workpiece or semiconductor wafer for further processing. Workpiece  
6      support 403 is shown in a "closed" or "deployed" position wherein the  
7      semiconductor wafer has been received by the workpiece support and  
8      is being exposed to the semiconductor manufacturing process in the  
9      semiconductor manufacturing chamber 404. Fig. 1 also shows an  
10     optional beam emitter 81 for emitting a laser beam detected by robotic  
11     wafer conveyors to indicate position of the unit.

12     Turning now to Fig. 2, an enlarged view of the workpiece support  
13     401 is shown. Workpiece support 401 advantageously includes operator  
14     base 405, a processing head 406, and an operator arm 407. Processing  
15     head 406 preferably includes workpiece holder or wafer holder 408 and  
16     which further includes fingers 409 for securely holding the workpiece  
17     during further process and manufacturing steps. Workpiece holder 408  
18     more preferably spins about workpiece spin axis 410.

19     The processing head is advantageously rotatable about processing  
20     head pivot axis or, more briefly termed, process pivot axis 411. In this  
21     manner, a workpiece (not shown) may be disposed between and grasped  
22     by the fingers 409, at which point the processing head is preferably  
23     rotated about process head pivot axis 411 to place the workpiece in a  
24     position to be exposed to the manufacturing process.

1           In the preferred embodiment, operator arm 407 may be pivoted  
2   about operator pivot axis 412. In this manner, the workpiece is  
3   advantageously lowered into the process bowl (not shown) to accomplish  
4   a step in the manufacture of the semiconductor wafer.

5           . Turning now to Figs. 3-5, the sequence of placing a workpiece on  
6   the workpiece support and exposing the workpiece to the semiconductor  
7   manufacturing process is shown. In Fig. 3, a workpiece *W* is shown as  
8   being held in place by fingertips 414 of fingers 409. Workpiece *W* is  
9   grasped by fingertips 414 after being placed in position by robot or  
10   other means.

11           Once the workpiece *W* has been securely engaged by fingertips  
12   414, processing head 406 can be rotated about process head pivot axis  
13   411 as shown in Fig. 4. Process head 406 is preferably rotated about  
14   axis 411 until workpiece *W* is at a desired angle, such as approximately  
15   horizontal. The operator arm 407 is pivoted about operator arm pivot  
16   axis 412 in a manner so as to coordinate the angular position of  
17   processing head 406. In the closed position, the processing head is  
18   placed against the rim of bowl 416 and the workpiece *W* is essentially  
19   in a horizontal plane. Once the workpiece *W* has been secured in this  
20   position, any of a series of various semiconductor manufacturing process  
21   steps may be applied to the workpiece as it is exposed in the  
22   processing bowl 417.

23           Since the processing head 406 is engaged by the operator arm  
24   407 on the left and right side by the preferably horizontal axis 411

1 connecting the pivot points of processing head 406, a high degree of  
2 stability about the horizontal plane is obtained. Further, since the  
3 operator arm 407 is likewise connected to the operator base 405 at left  
4 and right sides along the essentially horizontal line 412 connecting the  
5 pivot points of the operator arm, the workpiece support forms a  
6 structure having high rigidity in the horizontal plane parallel to and  
7 defined by axes 411 and 412. Finally, since operator base 405 is  
8 securely attached to the semiconductor process machine 400, rigidity  
9 about the spin axis 410 is also achieved.

10 Similarly, since processing head 406 is nested within the fork or  
11 yoke shaped operator arm 407 having left and right forks 418 and 419,  
12 respectively, as shown in Fig. 2, motion due to cantilevering of the  
13 processing head is reduced as a result of the reduced moment arm  
14 defined by the line connecting pivot axes 411 and 412.

15 In a typical semiconductor manufacturing process, the workpiece  
16 holder 408 will rotate the workpiece, having the process head 406  
17 secured at two points, that is, at the left and right forks 418 and 419,  
18 respectively, the vibration induced by the rotation of the workpiece  
19 holder 408 will be significantly reduced along the axis 411.

20 A more complete description of the components of the present  
21 invention and their operation and interrelation follows.

1

2      **Operator Base**

3      Turning now to Fig. 9, operator base 405 is shown. The present  
4      invention advantageously includes an operator base 405 which forms an  
5      essentially yoke-shaped base having an operator base back portion 420,  
6      an operator base left yoke arm 421, and an operator base right yoke  
7      arm 422. Yoke arms 421 and 422 are securely connected to the base  
8      of the yoke 420. In the preferred embodiment, the yoke arms are  
9      secured to the yoke base by the yoke arm fasteners 423. The yoke  
10     arm base in turn is advantageously connected to the semiconductor  
11     process machine 400 as shown in Fig. 1.

12     The upper portions of the yoke arm advantageously include  
13     receptacles for housing the operator arm bearings 424 which are used  
14     to support the pivot shafts of the operator arm 425, described more  
15     fully below.

16

17      **Operator Arm**

18      Still viewing Fig. 9, the present invention advantageously includes  
19      an operator arm 407. As described previously, operator arm 407  
20     preferably pivots about the operator arm pivot axis 412 which connects  
21     the center line defined by the centers of operator arm pivot bearings  
22     424.

23      Operator arm or pivot arm 407 is advantageously constructed in  
24      such a manner to reduce mass cantilevered about operator arm pivot

axis 412. This allows for quicker and more accurate positioning of the pivot arm as it is moved about pivot arm axis 412.

The left fork of the pivot arm 418, shown more clearly in Fig. 11, houses the mechanism for causing the pivot arm to lift or rotate about pivot arm pivot axis 412. Pivot arm right fork 419, shown more clearly in Fig. 10, houses the mechanism for causing the processing head 406 (not shown) to rotate about the process head pivot axis 411.

The process arm rear cavity 426, shown in Fig. 9, houses the lift motor 452 for causing the operator arm 407 to rotate about pivot arm axis 412. Process arm rear cavity 426 also houses rotate motor 428 which is used to cause the processing head 406 to rotate about the processing head pivot axis 411. The rotate motor 428 may more generally be described as a processing head pivot or rotate drive. Processing head 406 is mounted to operator arm 407 at processing head left pivot shaft 429 and processing head right pivot shaft 430.

Operator arm 407 is securely attached to left yoke arm 421 and right yoke arm 422 by operator arm pivot shafts 425 and operator arm pivot bearings 424, the right of which such bearing shaft and bearings are shown in Fig. 9.

## Operator Arm-Processing Head Rotate Mechanism

Turning now to Fig. 13, a sectional plan view of the right rear corner of operator arm 407 is shown. The right rear section of operator arm 407 advantageously contains the rotate mechanism which

1 is used to rotate processing head 406 about processing head pivot shafts  
2 430 and 429. Processing head rotate mechanism 431 preferably consists  
3 of rotate motor 428 which drives rotate shaft 432, more generally  
4 described as a processing head drive shaft. Rotate shaft 432 is inserted  
5 within rotate pulley 425 which also functions as the operator arm pivot  
6 shaft. As described previously, the operator arm pivot shaft/lift pulley  
7 is supported in operator arm pivot bearings 424, which are themselves  
8 supported in operator base yoke arm 422. Rotate shaft 432 is secured  
9 within left pulley 424 by securing collar 433. Securing collar 433  
10 secures rotate pulley 425 to rotate shaft 432 in a secure manner so as  
11 to assure a positive connection between rotate motor 428 and rotate  
12 pulley 425. An inner cover 584 is also provided.

13 Rotate motor 428 is disposed within process arm rear cavity 426  
14 and is supported by rotate motor support 434. Rotate motor 428  
15 preferably is a servo allowing for accurate control of speed and  
16 acceleration of the motor. Servo motor 428 is advantageously connected  
17 to rotate encoder 435 which is positioned on one end of rotate motor  
18 428. Rotate encoder 435, more generally described as a processing  
19 head encoder, allows for accurate measurement of the number of  
20 rotations of rotate motor 428, as well as the position, speed, and  
21 acceleration of the rotate shaft 432. The information from the rotate  
22 encoder may be used in a rotate circuit which may then be used to  
23 control the rotate motor when the rotate motor is a servo. This  
24 information is useful in obtaining the position and rate of travel of the

1 processing head, as well as controlling the final end point positions of  
2 the processing head as it is rotated about process head rotate axis 411.

3 The relationship between the rotate motor rotations, as measured  
4 by rotate encoder 435, may easily be determined once the diameters of  
5 the rotate pulley 425 and the processing head pulley 438 are known.  
6 These diameters can be used to determine the ratio of rotate motor  
7 relations to processing head rotations. This may be accomplished by  
8 a microprocessor, as well as other means.

9 Rotate pulley 425 is further supported within operator arm 407  
10 by rotate pulley inboard bearing 436 which is disposed about an  
11 extended flange on the rotate pulley 425. Rotate pulley inboard  
12 bearing 436 is secured by the body of the operator arm 407, as shown  
13 in Fig. 13.

14 Rotate pulley 425 advantageously drives rotate belt 437, more  
15 generally described as a flexible power transmission coupling. Referring  
16 now to Fig. 10, rotate belt 437 is shown in the side view of the right  
17 arm 419 of the operator arm 407. Rotate belt 437 is preferably a  
18 toothed timing belt to ensure positive engagement with the processing  
19 head drive wheel, more particularly described herein as the processing  
20 head pulley 438, (not shown in this view). In order to accommodate  
21 the toothed timing belt 437, both the rotate pulley 425 and the  
22 processing head pulley 438 are advantageously provided with gear teeth  
23 to match the tooth pattern of the timing belt to assure positive  
24 engagement of the pulleys with the rotate belt.

1        Rotate mechanism 431 is preferably provided with rotate belt  
2        tensioner 439, useful for adjusting the belt to take up slack as the belt  
3        may stretch during use, and to allow for adjustment of the belt to  
4        assure positive engagement with both the rotate pulley and the  
5        processing head pulley. Rotate belt tensioner 439 adjusts the tension  
6        of rotate belt 437 by increasing the length of the belt path between  
7        rotate pulley 425 and processing head pulley 438, thereby accommodating  
8        any excess length in the belt. Inversely, the length of the belt path  
9        may also be shortened by adjusting rotate belt tensioner 439 so as to  
10        create a more linear path in the upper portion of rotate belt 437.  
11        The tensioner 439 is adjusted by rotating it about tensioner hub 468  
12        and securing it in a new position.

13        Turning now to Fig. 13, processing head pulley 438 is mounted  
14        to processing head rotate shaft 430 in a secured manner so that  
15        rotation of processing head pulley 438 will cause processing head rotate  
16        shaft 430 to rotate. Processing head shaft 430 is mounted to operator  
17        arm right fork 419 by processing head shaft bearing 440, which in turn  
18        is secured in the frame of the right fork 419 by processing head rotate  
19        bearing 469. In a like manner, processing head shaft 429 is mounted  
20        in operator arm left fork 418 by processing head shaft bearing 441, as  
21        shown in Fig. 9.

22        Processing head pivot shafts 430 and 429 are advantageously  
23        hollow shafts. This feature is useful in allowing electrical, optical,  
24        pneumatic, and other signal and supply services to be provided to the

1 processing head. Service lines such as those just described which are  
2 routed through the hollow portions of processing head pivot shafts 429  
3 and 430 are held in place in the operator arms by cable brackets 442  
4 and 443. Cable brackets 442 and 443 serve a dual purpose. First,  
5 routing the service lines away from operating components within the  
6 operator arm left and right forks. Second, cable brackets 442 and 443  
7 serve a useful function in isolating forces imparted to the service cables  
8 by the rotating action of processing head 406 as it rotates about  
9 processing head pivot shafts 429 and 430. This rotating of the  
10 processing head 406 has the consequence that the service cables are  
11 twisted within the pivot shafts as a result of the rotation, thereby  
12 imparting forces to the cables. These forces are preferably isolated to  
13 a particular area so as to minimize the effects of the forces on the  
14 cables. The cable brackets 442 and 443 achieve this isolating effect.

15 The process head rotate mechanism 431, shown in Fig. 13, is also  
16 advantageously provided with a rotate overtravel protect 444, which  
17 functions as a rotate switch. Rotate overtravel protect 444 preferably  
18 acts as a secondary system to the rotate encoder 435 should the control  
19 system fail for some reason to stop servo 428 in accordance with a  
20 predetermined position, as would be established by rotate encoder 435.  
21 Turning to Fig. 13, the rotate overtravel protect 444 is shown in plan  
22 view. The rotate overtravel protect preferably consists of rotate optical  
23 switches 445 and 446, which are configured to correspond to the  
24 extreme (beginning and end point) portions of the processing head, as

1 well as the primary switch component which preferably is a rotate flag  
2 447. Rotate flag 447 is securely attached to processing head pulley 438  
3 such that when processing head shaft 430 (and consequently processing  
4 head 406) are rotated by virtue of drive forces imparted to the  
5 processing head pulley 425 by the rotate belt 437, the rotate flag 447  
6 will rotate thereby tracking the rotate motion of processing head 406.  
7 Rotate optical switches 445 and 446 are positioned such that rotate flag  
8 447 may pass within the optical path generated by each optical switch,  
9 thereby generating a switch signal. The switch signal is used to control  
10 an event such as stopping rotate motor 428. Rotate optical switch 445  
11 will guard against overtravel of processing head 406 in one direction,  
12 while rotate optical switch 446 will provide against overtravel of the  
13 processing head 406 in the opposite direction.

14

#### 15 **Operator Arm-Lift Mechanism**

16 Operator arm 407 is also advantageously provided with an  
17 operator arm lift mechanism 448 which is useful for causing the  
18 operator arm to lift, that is, to pivot or rotate about operator arm  
19 pivot axis 412. Turning to Fig. 14, the operator arm lift mechanism  
20 448 is shown in the sectional plan view of the right rear corner of  
21 operator arm 407.

22 Operator arm lift mechanism 448 is advantageously driven by lift  
23 motor 452. Lift motor 452 may be more generally described as an  
24 operator arm drive or operator arm pivot drive. Lift motor 452 is

1      preferably a servo motor and is more preferably provided with an  
2      operator encoder, more specifically described as lift motor encoder 456.  
3      When lift motor 452 is a servo motor coupled with lift encoder 456,  
4      information regarding the speed and absolute rotational position of the  
5      lift motor shaft 454 may be known from the lift encoder signal.  
6      Additionally, by virtue of being a servo mechanism, the angular speed  
7      and acceleration of lift motor 452 may be easily controlled by use of  
8      the lift signal by an electrical circuit. Such a lift circuit may be  
9      configured to generate desired lift characteristics (speed, angle,  
10     acceleration, etc.). Fig. 14 shows that the lift operator may also  
11     include a brake 455 which is used to safely stop the arm if power fails.

12     Lift motor 452 drives lift motor shaft 454 which in turn drives lift  
13     gear drive 453. Lift gear drive 453 is a gear reduction drive to  
14     produce a reduced number of revolutions at lift drive shaft 456 as the  
15     function of input revolutions from lift motor shaft 454.

16     Lift drive gear shaft 456 is secured to lift anchor 451 which is  
17     more clearly shown in Fig. 11. Lift anchor 451 is preferably shaped  
18     to have at least one flat side for positively engaging lift bushing 449.  
19     Lift anchor 451 is secured to lift drive shaft 456 by anchor plate 458  
20     and anchor fasteners 457. In this manner, when lift drive shaft 456 is  
21     rotated, it will positively engage lift bushing 449. Returning to Fig. 14,  
22     it is seen that lift bushing 449 is mounted in operator left yoke arm  
23     421, and is thus fixed with respect to operator base 405. Lift bearing  
24     450 is disposed about the lift bushing shank and is supported in

operator arm 407 by lift bearing support 460 which is a bushing configured to receive lift bearing 450 on a first end and to support lift gear drive 453 on a second end. Lift bearing support 460 is further supported within operator arm 407 by operator arm frame 461. The lift arm is thus free to pivot about lift bushing 449 by virtue of lift bearing 450.

In operation, as lift motor 452 causes lift gear drive 453 to produce rotations at gear drive shaft 456, lift anchor 451 is forced against lift bushing 449 which is securely positioned within right operator yoke arm 421. The reactive force against the lift anchor 451 will cause lift bearing support 460 to rotate relative to lift bushing 449. Since lift bushing 449 is fixed in operator base 405, and since operator base 405 is fixed to processing machine 400, rotation of lift bearing support 460 will cause lift arm 407 to pivot about operator arm pivot axis 412, thereby moving the processing head 406. It is advantageous to consider the gear drive shaft (or "operator arm shaft") as being fixed with respect to operator base 405 when envisioning the operation of the lift mechanism.

Operator lift mechanism 448 is also advantageously provided with a lift overtravel protect 462 or lift switch. The lift rotate protect operates in a manner similar to that described for the rotate overtravel protect 444 described above. Turning now to Fig. 11, a left side view of the operator arm 407 is shown which shows the lift overtravel protect in detail.

1        The lift overtravel protect preferably includes a lift optical switch  
2        low 463 and a lift optical switch high 464. Other types of limit  
3        switches can also be used. The switch high 464 and switch low 463  
4        correspond to beginning and endpoint travel of lift arm 407. The  
5        primary lift switch component is lift flag 465, which is firmly attached  
6        to left operator base yoke arm 421. The lift optical switches are  
7        preferably mounted to the movable operator arm 407. As operator arm  
8        407 travels in an upward direction in pivoting about operator arm pivot  
9        axis 412, lift optical switch high 464 will approach the lift flag 465.  
10       Should the lift motor encoder 455 fail to stop the lift motor 454 as  
11       desired, the lift flag 465 will break the optical path of the lift optical  
12       switch high 464 thus producing a signal which can be used to stop the  
13       lift motor. In like manner, when the operator arm 407 is being  
14       lowered by rotating it in a clockwise direction about the operator arm  
15       pivot axis 412, as shown in Fig. 11, overtravel of operator arm 407 will  
16       cause lift optical switch low 463 to have its optical path interrupted by  
17       lift flag 465, thus producing a signal which may be used to stop lift  
18       motor 452. As is shown in Fig. 11, lift flag 465 is mounted to left  
19       operator base yoke arm 421 with slotted lift flag mounting slots 467  
20       and removable lift flag fasteners 466. Such an arrangement allows for  
21       the lift flag to be adjusted so that the lift overtravel protect system  
22       only becomes active after the lift arm 407 has traveled beyond a  
23       preferred point.

24

1 Processing Head

2         Turning now to Fig. 6, a front elevation schematic view of the  
3 processing head 406 is shown. Processing head 406 is described in  
4 more detail in Figs. 7 and 8. Turning now to Fig. 7, a sectional view  
5 of the left front side of processing head 406 is shown. Processing head  
6 406 advantageously includes a processing head housing 470 and frame  
7 582. Processing head 406 is preferably round in shape in plan view  
8 allowing it to easily pivot about process head pivot axis 411 with no  
9 interference from operator arm 407, as demonstrated in Figs. 3-5.  
10 Returning to Fig. 7, processing head housing 470 more preferably has  
11 circumferential grooves 471 which are formed into the side of process  
12 head housing 470. Circumferential grooves 471 have a functional benefit  
13 of increasing heat dissipation from processing head 406.

14         The sides of processing head housing 470 are advantageously  
15 provided with rotate shaft openings 474 and 475 for receiving  
16 respectively left and right processing head pivot shafts 429 and 430.  
17 Processing head pivot shafts 429 and 430 are secured to the processing  
18 head 406 by respective left and right processing head mounts 472 and  
19 473. Processing head mounts 472 and 473 are affirmative connected to  
20 processing head frame 582 which also supports processing head door 476  
21 which is itself securely fastened to processing head housing 470.  
22 Consequently, processing head pivot shafts 429 and 430 are fixed with  
23 respect to processing head 407 and may therefore rotate or pivot with  
24 respect to operator arm 407. The details of how processing head pivot

1 shafts 429 and 430 are received within operator arm 407 were discussed  
2 supra.

3 Processing head housing 470 forms a processing head void 477  
4 which is used to house additional processing head components such as  
5 the spin motor, the pneumatic finger actuators, and service lines, all  
6 discussed more fully below.

7 The processing head also advantageously includes a workpiece  
8 holder and fingers for holding a workpiece, as is also more fully  
9 described below.

10

### 11 Processing Head Spin Motor

12 In a large number of semiconductor manufacturing processes, is  
13 desirable to spin the semiconductor wafer or workpiece during the  
14 process, for example to assure even distribution of applied process fluids  
15 across the face of the semiconductor wafer, or to aid drying of the  
16 wafer after a wet chemistry process. It is therefore desirable to be  
17 able to rotate the semiconductor workpiece while it is held by the  
18 processing head.

19 The semiconductor workpiece is held during the process by  
20 workpiece holder 478 described more fully below. In order to spin  
21 workpiece holder 478 relative to processing head 406 about spin axis  
22 479, an electric, pneumatic, or other type of spin motor or workpiece  
23 spin drive is advantageously provided.

1           Turning to Fig. 8, spin motor 480 has armatures 526 which drive  
2 spin motor shaft 483 in rotational movement to spin workpiece holder  
3 478. Spin motor 480 is supported by bottom motor bearing 492 in  
4 bottom motor housing 482. Bottom motor housing 482 is secured to  
5 processing head 406 by door 476. Spin motor 480 is thus free to  
6 rotate relative to processing head housing 470 and door 476. Spin  
7 motor 480 is preferably additionally held in place by top motor housing  
8 481 which rests on processing head door 476. Spin motor 480 is  
9 rotationally isolated from top motor housing 481 by top motor bearing  
10 493, which is disposed between the spin motor shaft 483 and top motor  
11 housing 481.

12           The spin motor is preferably an electric motor which is provided  
13 with an electrical supply source through pivot shaft 429 and/or 430.  
14 Spin motor 480 will drive spin motor shaft 483 about spin axis 479.

15           To secure workpiece holder rotor 484 to spin motor shaft 483,  
16 workpiece holder rotor 484 is preferably provided with a rotor hub 485.  
17 Rotor hub 485 defines a rotor hub recess 486 which receives a flared  
18 end of workpiece holder shaft 491. The flared end 487 of workpiece  
19 holder shaft 491 is secured within the rotor hub recess 486 by  
20 workpiece shaft snap-ring 488 which fits within rotor recess groove 489  
21 above the flared portion 487 of workpiece holder shaft 491.

22           The workpiece holder shaft 491 is fitted inside of spin motor  
23 shaft 483 and protrudes from the top of the spin motor shaft. The  
24 top of workpiece holder shaft 491 is threaded to receive thin nut 527

1 (see Fig. 7). Thin nut 527 is tightened against optical tachometer 499  
2 (describe more fully below). Optical tachometer 499 is securely  
3 attached to spin motor shaft 483 such that as the spin motor 480  
4 rotationally drives the spin motor shaft 483, the workpiece holder shaft  
5 491 is also driven.

6 Workpiece holders may be easily changed out to accommodate  
7 various configurations which may be required for the various processes  
8 encountered in manufacturing of the semiconductors. This is  
9 accomplished by removing spin encoder 498 (described below), and then  
10 thin nut 527. Once the thin nut has been removed the workpiece  
11 holder 478 will drop away from the processing head 406.

12 The processing head is also advantageously provided with a spin  
13 encoder 498, more generally described as a workpiece holder encoder,  
14 and an optical tachometer 499. As shown in Fig. 7, spin encoder 498  
15 is mounted to top motor housing 481 by encoder support 528 so as to  
16 remain stationary with respect to the processing head 406. Optical  
17 tachometer 499 is mounted on spin motor shaft 483 so as to rotate  
18 with the motor 480. When operated in conjunction, the spin encoder  
19 498 and optical tachometer 499 allow the speed, acceleration, and  
20 precise rotational position of the spin motor shaft (and therefore the  
21 workpiece holder 478) to be known. In this manner, and when spin  
22 motor 480 is provided as a servo motor, a high degree of control over  
23 the spin rate, acceleration, and rotational angular position of the  
24 workpiece with respect to the process head 407 may be obtained.

1       In one application of the present invention the workpiece support  
2       is used to support a semiconductor workpiece in an electroplating  
3       process. To accomplish the electroplating an electric current is provided  
4       to the workpiece through an alternate embodiment of the fingers  
5       (described more fully below). To provide electric current to the finger,  
6       conductive wires are run from the tops of the fingers inside of the  
7       workpiece holder 478 through the electrode wire holes 525 in the flared  
8       lower part of workpiece holder shaft 491. The electrode wires are  
9       provided electric current from electrical lines run through processing  
10      pivot shaft 429 and/or 430.

11       The electrical line run through pivot shaft 430/429 will by nature  
12      be stationary with respect to processing head housing 470. However,  
13      since the workpiece holder rotor is intended to be capable of rotation  
14      during the electroplating process, the wires passing into workpiece  
15      support shaft 491 through electrode wire holes 525 may rotate with  
16      respect to processing head housing 470. Since the rotating electrode  
17      wires within workpiece shaft 491 and the stationary electrical supply  
18      lines run through pivot shaft 430/429 must be in electrical  
19      communication, the rotational/stationary problem must be overcome. In  
20      the preferred embodiment, this is accomplished by use of electrical slip  
21      ring 494.

22       Electrical slip ring 494, shown in Fig. 7, has a lower wire junction  
23      529 for receiving the conductive ends of the electrical wires passing into  
24      workpiece holder shaft 491 by electrode wire holes 525. Lower wire

junction 529 is held in place within workpiece holder shaft 491 by insulating cylindrical collar 497 and thus rotates with spin motor shaft 483. The electrode wires terminate in a single electrical contact 531 at the top of the lower wire junction 529. Electrical slip ring 494 further has a contact pad 530 which is suspended within the top of workpiece holder shaft 491. Contact pad 530 is mechanically fastened to spin encoder 493, which, as described previously, remains stationary with respect to processing head housing 470. The stationary-to-rotational transition is made at the tip of contact pad 530, which is in contact with the rotating electrical contact 531. Contact pad 530 is electrically conductive and is in electrical communication with electrical contact 531. In the preferred embodiment, contact pad 530 is made of copper-beryllium. A wire 585 carries current to finger assemblies when current supply is needed, such as on the alternative embodiment described below.

#### **Processing Head Finger Actuators**

Workpiece holder 478, described more fully below, advantageously includes fingers for holding the workpiece *W* in the workpiece holder, as shown in Figs. 7 and 8. Since the workpiece holder 478 may be removed as described above, it is possible to replace one style of workpiece holder with another. Since a variety of workpiece holders with a variety of fingers for holding the workpiece is possible, it is desirable to have a finger actuator mechanism disposed within processing

1 head 407 which is compatible with any given finger arrangement. The  
2 invention is therefore advantageously provided with a finger actuator  
3 mechanism.

4 Turning to Fig. 7, a finger actuator mechanism 500 is shown.  
5 Finger actuator mechanism 500 is preferably a pneumatically operated  
6 mechanism. A pneumatic cylinder is formed by a cavity 501 within top  
7 motor housing 481. Pneumatic piston 502 is disposed within cavity 501.  
8 Pneumatic piston 502 is biased in an upward position within cavity 501  
9 by actuator spring 505. Actuator spring 505 is confined within cavity  
10 501 by cavity end cap 507, which is itself constrained by retaining ring  
11 508. Pneumatic fluid is provided to the top of pneumatic piston 502  
12 via pneumatic inlet 503. Pneumatic fluid is provided to pneumatic inlet  
13 503 by pneumatic supply line 504 which is routed through processing  
14 head pivot shaft 429 and hence through the left fork 418 of the  
15 operator arm 407. Turning to Fig. 8, it can be seen that a second  
16 pneumatic cylinder which is identical to the pneumatic cylinder just  
17 described is also provided.

18 Pneumatic piston 502 is attached to actuator plate 509 by actuator  
19 plate connect screw 510. Wave springs 529 provide flexibility to the  
20 connecting at screws 510. Actuator plate 509 is preferably an annular  
21 plate concentric with the spin motor 580 and disposed about the bottom  
22 motor housing 482, and is symmetrical about spin axis 479. Actuator  
23 plate 509 is secured against pneumatic piston 502 by bushing 512 which  
24 is disposed in pneumatic piston recess 511 about pneumatic piston 502

1      Bushing 512 acts as a support for wave springs 529 to allow a slight  
2      tilting of the actuator plate 509. Such an arrangement is beneficial for  
3      providing equal action against the finger actuator contracts 513 about  
4      the entire actuator plate or ring 509.

5      When pneumatic fluid is provided to the space above the  
6      pneumatic piston 502, the pneumatic piston 502 travels in a downward  
7      direction compressing actuator spring 505. As pneumatic piston 502  
8      travels downward, actuator plate 509 is likewise pushed downward by  
9      flexible bushing 512. Actuator plate 509 will contact finger actuator  
10     contacts 513 causing the fingers to operate as more fully described  
11     below.

12     Actuator seals 506 are provided to prevent pneumatic gas from  
13     bypassing the top of the pneumatic piston 502 and entering the area  
14     occupied by actuator spring 505.

15     .

#### 16     Processing Head Workpiece Holder

17     Workpiece holder 478 is used to hold the workpiece *W*, which is  
18     typically a semiconductor wafer, in position during the semiconductor  
19     manufacturing process.

20     Turning now to Fig. 8, a finger 409 is shown in cross section.  
21     Finger 409 advantageously includes a finger actuator contact 513 which  
22     is contacted by actuator plate 509, as described above. Finger actuator  
23     contact 513 is connected to finger actuator lever 514 (more generally,  
24     "finger extension") which is cantilevered from and connected to the

1 finger stem 515. Finger stem 515 is inserted into finger actuator lever  
2 514. Disposed about the portion of the finger actuator lever which  
3 encompasses and secures finger stem 515 is finger diaphragm 519.  
4 Finger diaphragm 519 is preferably made of a flexible material such as  
5 Tetrafluoroethylene, also known as Teflon® (registered trademark of E.  
6 I. DuPont de Nemours Company). Finger 409 is mounted to workpiece  
7 holder rotor 484 using finger diaphragm 519. Finger diaphragm 519 is  
8 inserted into the finger opening 521 in rotor 484. The finger  
9 diaphragm 519 is inserted into the rotor from the side opposite that to  
10 which the workpiece will be presented. Finger diaphragm 519 is  
11 secured to rotor 484 against rotor diaphragm lip 523. Forces are  
12 intentionally imparted as a result of contact between the actuator plate  
13 509 and the finger actuator contact 513 when the finger actuator  
14 mechanism 500 is actuated.

15 Finger actuator lever 514 is advantageously biased in a horizontal  
16 position by finger spring 520 which acts on finger actuator tab 522  
17 which in turn is connected to finger actuator lever 514. Finger spring  
18 520 is preferably a torsion spring secured to the workpiece holder rotor  
19 484.

20 Finger stem 515 is also preferably provided with finger collar or  
21 nut 517 which holds the finger stem 515 against shoulder 518. Finger  
22 collar 517 threads or otherwise securely fits over the lower end of  
23 finger actuator lever 514. Below the finger collar 517, finger stem 515  
24 extends for a short distance and terminates in fingertip 414. Fingertip

1 414 contains a slight groove or notch which is beneficially shaped to  
2 receive the edge of the workpiece *W*.

3 In actuation, finger actuator plate 509 is pushed downward by  
4 finger actuator mechanism 500. Finger actuator plate 509 continues its  
5 downward travel contacting finger actuator contacts 513. As actuator  
6 plate 509 continues its downward travel, finger actuator contacts are  
7 pushed in a downward direction. As a result of the downward  
8 direction, the finger actuator levers 514 are caused to pivot.

9 In the preferred embodiment, a plurality of fingers are used to  
10 hold the workpiece. In one example, six fingers were used. Once the  
11 actuator plate 509 has traveled its full extent, the finger stems 515 will  
12 be tilted away from the spin axis 479. The circumference described by  
13 the fingertips in this spread-apart position should be greater than the  
14 circumference of the workpiece *W*. Once a workpiece *W* has been  
15 positioned proximate to the fingertips, the pneumatic pressure is relieved  
16 on the finger actuator and the actuator spring 505 causes the pneumatic  
17 piston 502 to return to the top of the cavity 501. In so doing, the  
18 actuator plate 509 is retracted and the finger actuator levers are  
19 returned to their initial position by virtue of finger springs 520.

20

### 21 Semiconductor Workpiece Holder - Electroplating Embodiment

22 Fig. 15 is a side elevational view of a semiconductor workpiece  
23 holder 810 constructed according to a preferred aspect of the invention.

24 Workpiece holder 810 is used for processing a semiconductor

1 workpiece such as a semiconductor wafer shown in phantom at  $W$ . One  
2 preferred type of processing undertaken with workpiece holder 810 is  
3 a workpiece electroplating process in which a semiconductor workpiece  
4 is held by workpiece holder 810 and an electrical potential is applied  
5 to the workpiece to enable plating material to be plated thereon. Such  
6 can be, and preferably is accomplished utilizing a processing enclosure  
7 or chamber which includes a bottom half or bowl 811 shown in  
8 phantom lines in Fig. 1. Bottom half 811 together with workpiece  
9 holder 810 forms a sealed, protected chamber for semiconductor  
10 workpiece processing. Accordingly, preferred reactants can be introduced  
11 into the chamber for further processing. Another preferred aspect of  
12 workpiece holder 810 is that such moves, rotates or otherwise spins the  
13 held workpiece during processing as will be described in more detail  
14 below.

15

#### 16 Processing Head and Processing Head Operator

17 Turning now to Fig. 15, semiconductor workpiece holder 810  
18 includes a workpiece support 812. Workpiece support 812  
19 advantageously supports a workpiece during processing. Workpiece  
20 support 812 includes a processing head or spin head assembly 814.  
21 Workpiece support 812 also includes a head operator or lift/rotate  
22 assembly 816. Spin head assembly 814 is operatively coupled with  
23 lift/rotate assembly 816. Spin head assembly 814 advantageously enables  
24 a held workpiece to be spun or moved about a defined axis during

1 processing. Such enhances conformal coverage of the preferred plating  
2 material over the held workpiece. Lift/rotate assembly 816  
3 advantageously lifts spin head assembly 814 out of engagement with the  
4 bottom half 811 of the enclosure in which the preferred processing  
5 takes place. Such lifting is preferably about an axis  $x_1$ . Once so  
6 lifted, lift/rotate assembly 816 also rotates the spin head and held  
7 workpiece about an axis  $x_2$  so that the workpiece can be presented  
8 face-up and easily removed from workpiece support 812. In the  
9 illustrated and preferred embodiment, such rotation is about 180° from  
10 the disposition shown in Fig. 15. Advantageously, a new workpiece can  
11 be fixed or otherwise attached to the workpiece holder for further  
12 processing as described in detail below.

13 The workpiece can be removed from or fixed to workpiece holder  
14 810 automatically by means of a robotically controlled arm.  
15 Alternatively, the workpiece can be manually removed from or fixed to  
16 workpiece holder 810. Additionally, more than one workpiece holder  
17 can be provided to support processing of multiple semiconductor  
18 workpieces. Other means of removing and fixing a semiconductor  
19 workpiece are possible.

20 Fig. 16 is a front sectional view of the Fig. 15 semiconductor  
21 workpiece holder. As shown, workpiece support 812 includes a motor  
22 818 which is operatively coupled with a rotor 820. Rotor 820 is  
23 advantageously mounted for rotation about a rotor spin axis 822 and  
24 serves as a staging platform upon which at least one finger assembly

1       824 is mounted. Preferably, more than one finger assembly is mounted  
2       on rotor 820, and even more preferably, four or more such finger  
3       assemblies are mounted thereon and described in detail below although  
4       only two are shown in Fig. 16. The preferred finger assemblies are  
5       instrumental in fixing or otherwise holding a semiconductor workpiece  
6       on semiconductor workpiece holder 810. Each finger assembly is  
7       advantageously operatively connected or associated with a actuator 825.  
8       The actuator is preferably a pneumatic linkage which serves to assist  
9       in moving the finger assemblies between a disengaged position in which  
10      a workpiece may be removed from or added to the workpiece holding,  
11      and an engaged position in which the workpiece is fixed upon the  
12      workpiece holder for processing. Such is described in more detail  
13      below.

14      Fig. 17 is a top or plan view of rotor 820 which is effectively  
15      taken along line 3-3 in Fig. 16. Fig. 16 shows the preferred four  
16      finger assemblies 824. As shown, rotor 820 is generally circular and  
17      resembles from the top a spoked wheel with a nearly continuous bottom  
18      surface. Rotor 820 includes a rotor center piece 826 at the center of  
19      which lies rotor axis 822. A plurality of struts or spokes 828 are  
20      joined or connected to rotor center 826 and extend outwardly to join  
21      with and support a rotor perimeter piece 830. Advantageously, four of  
22      spokes 828 support respective preferred finger assemblies 824. Finger  
23      assemblies 824 are advantageously positioned to engage a semiconductor  
24      workpiece, such as a wafer *W* which is shown in phantom lines in the

1 position such would occupy during processing. When a workpiece is so  
2 engaged, it is fixedly held in place relative to the rotor so that  
3 processing can be effected. Such processing can include exposing the  
4 workpiece to processing conditions which are effective to form a layer  
5 of material on one or more surfaces or portions of a wafer or other  
6 workpiece. Such processing can also include moving the workpiece  
7 within a processing environment to enhance or improve conformal  
8 coverage of a layering material. Such processing can, and preferably  
9 does include exposing the workpiece to processing conditions which are  
10 effective to form an electroplated layer on or over the workpiece.

11

## 12 Finger Assembly

13 Referring now to Figs. 18-20, various views of a preferred finger  
14 assembly are shown. The preferred individual finger assemblies are  
15 constructed in accordance with the description below. Fig. 18 is an  
16 isolated side sectional view of a finger assembly constructed in  
17 accordance with a preferred aspect of the invention. Fig. 19 is a side  
18 elevational view of the finger assembly turned 90° from the view of  
19 Fig. 18. Fig. 20 is a fragmentary cross-sectional enlarged view of a  
20 finger assembly and associated rotor structure. The finger assembly as  
21 set forth in Figs. 18 and 19 is shown in the relative position such as  
22 it would occupy when processing head or spin head assembly 814 (Figs.  
23 15 and 16) is moved or rotated by head operator or lift/rotate assembly  
24 816 into a position for receiving a semiconductor workpiece. The finger

assembly is shown in Figs. 18 and 20 in an orientation of about 180° from the position shown in Fig. 20. This typically varies because spin head assembly 814 is rotated 180° from the position shown in Figs. 15 and 16 in order to receive a semiconductor workpiece. Accordingly, finger assemblies 824 would be so rotated. Lesser degrees of rotation are possible.

Finger assembly 824 includes a finger assembly frame 832. Preferably, finger assembly frame 832 is provided in the form of a sealed contact sleeve which includes an angled slot 832a, only a portion of which is shown in Fig. 19. Angled slot 832a advantageously enables the finger assembly to be moved, preferably pneumatically, both longitudinally and rotationally as will be explained below. Such preferred movement enables a semiconductor workpiece to be engaged, electrically contacted, and processed in accordance with the invention.

Finger assembly frame 832 includes a finger assembly frame outer flange 834 which, as shown in Fig. 20, engages an inner drive plate portion 836 of rotor 820. Such engagement advantageously fixes or seats finger assembly frame 832 relative to rotor 820. Such, in turn, enables the finger assembly, or a portion thereof, to be moved relative to the rotor for engaging the semiconductor workpiece.

## Finger Assembly Drive System

Referring to Figs. 16 and 18-20, the finger assembly includes a finger assembly drive system which is utilized to move the finger

assembly between engaged and disengaged positions. The finger assembly drive system includes a bearing 838 and a collet 840 operatively adjacent the bearing. Bearing 838 includes a bearing receptacle 839 for receiving a pneumatically driven source, a fragmented portion of which is shown directly above the receptacle in Fig. 20. The pneumatically driven source serves to longitudinally reciprocate and rotate collet 840, and hence a preferred portion of finger assembly 824. A preferred pneumatically driven source is described below in more detail in connection with the preferred longitudinal and rotational movement effectuated thereby. Such longitudinal reciprocation is affected by a biasing mechanism in the form of a spring 842 which is operatively mounted between finger assembly frame 832 and a spring seat 844. The construction develops a bias between finger assembly frame 832 and spring seat 844 to bias the finger into engagement against a wafer. Advantageously, the cooperation between the above mentioned pneumatically driven source as affected by the biasing mechanism of the finger assembly drive system, enable collet 840 to be longitudinally reciprocated in both extending and retracting modes of movement. As such, finger assembly 824 includes a biased portion which is biased toward a first position and which is movable to a second position away from the first position. Other manners of longitudinally reciprocating the finger assembly are possible.

## 1      Finger Assembly Electrical System

2      Referring to Figs. 16 and 19, the finger assembly preferably  
3      includes a finger assembly electrical system which is utilized to  
4      effectuate an electrical bias to a held workpiece and supply electrical  
5      current relative thereto. The finger assembly electrical system includes  
6      a pin connector 846 and a finger 848. Pin connector 846  
7      advantageously provides an electrical connection to a power source (not  
8      shown) via wire 585 and associate slip ring mechanism, described above  
9      in connection with Fig. 7 and other Figs. This is for delivering an  
10     electrical bias and current to an electrode which is described below.  
11     Pin connector 846 also rides within angled slot 832a thereby  
12     mechanically defining the limits to which the finger assembly may be  
13     both longitudinally and rotationally moved.

14     Finger 848 is advantageously fixed or secured to or within collet  
15     840 by a nut 850 which threadably engages a distal end portion of  
16     collet 840 as shown best in Fig. 18. An anti-rotation pin 852  
17     advantageously secures finger 848 within collet 840 and prevents relative  
18     rotation therebetween. Electrical current is conducted from connector  
19     846 through collet 840 to finger 860, all of which are conductive, such  
20     as from stainless steel. The finger and collet can be coated with a  
21     suitable dielectric coating 856, such as TEFLON or others. The collet  
22     840 and finger member 860 are in one form of the invention made  
23     hollow and tubular to conduct a purge gas therethrough.

1           Finger assembly 824 may also optionally include a distal tip or  
2           finger tip 854. Tip 854 may also have a purge gas passage formed  
3           therethrough. Finger tip 854 advantageously engages against a  
4           semiconductor workpiece (see Fig. 20) and assists in holding or fixing  
5           the position of the workpiece relative to workpiece holder 810. Finger  
6           tip 854 also assists in providing an operative electrical connection  
7           between the finger assembly and a workpiece to which an electrical  
8           bias<sup>ed</sup> is to be applied and through which current can move. Finger  
9           tip 85 can include an electrode contact 858 for electrically contacting  
10           a surface of a semiconductor workpiece once such workpiece is secured  
11           as describe below.

12

### 13           Finger Assembly Drive System Interface

14           A finger assembly drive system interface is operatively coupled  
15           with the finger assembly drive system to effectuate movement of the  
16           finger assembly between the engaged and disengaged positions. A  
17           preferred finger assembly drive system interface is described with  
18           reference to Figs. 16 and 20. One component of the finger assembly  
19           drive system interface is a finger actuator 862. Finger actuator 862 is  
20           advantageously provided for moving the finger assembly between the  
21           engaged and disengaged position. Finger actuator 862 acts by engaging  
22           bearing receptacle 839 and moving finger assembly 824 between an  
23           engaged position and a disengaged position. In the engaged position,

1      finger tip 854 is engaged against a semiconductor workpiece. In the  
2      disengaged position finger tip 854 is moved away from the workpiece.

3      The finger assembly drive system interface includes pneumatic  
4      actuator 825 (Fig. 16). Pneumatic actuators 825 are operatively  
5      connected to an actuation ring 863 and operates thereupon causing the  
6      drive plate to move reciprocally in the vertical direction as viewed in  
7      Fig. 16. Finger actuator 862 is operatively connected to actuation ring  
8      863-in a manner which, upon pneumatic actuation, moves the finger  
9      actuator into engagement with bearing receptacle 839 along the dashed  
10     line in Fig. 20. Such allows or enables the finger assembly to be  
11     moved longitudinally along a first movement path axis 864.

12     Pneumatic actuator linkage 825 also includes a secondary linkage  
13     865. Secondary linkage 865 is pneumatic as well and includes a link  
14     arm 867. Link arm 867 is connected or joined to an actuator torque  
15     ring 869. Preferably, torque ring 869 is concentric with rotor 820 (Fig.  
16     17) and circuitously links each of the finger actuators together. A  
17     pneumatic operator 871 is advantageously linked with the secondary  
18     linkage 865 for applying force and operating the linkage by angularly  
19     displacing torque ring 869. This in turn rotates the finger assemblies  
20     into and away from the engaged position.

21     Preferably finger actuator engagement bits 862, under the influence  
22     of pneumatic linkage 825, moves the finger assembly, and more  
23     specifically collet 840 and finger 848 along a first axial movement path  
24     along axis 864. The finger actuator engagement bits 862, then under

1 the influence of pneumatic operator 871 are turned about the axes of  
2 each bit like a screwdriver. This moves collet 840 and finger 848 in  
3 a second angular movement. Such second movement turns the fingers  
4 sufficiently to produce the angular displacement shown in Fig. 21.  
5 According to a preferred aspect of this invention, such movement of the  
6 finger assemblies between the engaged and disengaged positions takes  
7 place when spin head assembly 814 has been moved 180° from its Fig.  
8 15 disposition into a face-up condition.

9 The engagement bits 862 can be provided with a purge gas  
10 passage therethrough. Gas is supplied via tube 893 and is passed  
11 through the finger assemblies.

12

### 13 Engaged and Disengaged Positions

14 Fig. 21 is a view of a portion of a finger assembly, taken along  
15 line 7-7 in Fig. 18. Such shows in more detail the above-described  
16 engaged and disengaged positions and movement therebetween relative  
17 to a workpiece *W*. In the disengaged position, finger 848 is positioned  
18 adjacent the semiconductor workpiece and the finger tip and electrode  
19 contact do not overlap with workpiece *W*. In the engaged position, the  
20 finger tip overlaps with the workpiece and the electrode is brought to  
21 bear against the workpiece. From the disengaged position, finger  
22 assembly 824, upon the preferred actuation, is moved in a first direction  
23 away from the disengaged position. Preferably, such first direction is  
24 longitudinal and along first movement path axis 864. Such longitudinal

1 movement is linear and in the direction of arrow A as shown in Figs.  
2 18 and 19. The movement moves the finger assembly to the position  
3 shown in dashed lines in Fig. 18. Such movement is effectuated by  
4 pneumatic operator 825 which operates upon actuation ring 863 (Fig.  
5 16). This in turn, causes finger actuator 862 to engage with finger  
6 assembly 824. Such linear movement is limited by angled slot 832a.  
7 Thereafter, the finger assembly is preferably moved in a second  
8 direction which is different from the first direction and preferably  
9 rotational about the first movement path axis 864. Such is illustrated  
10 in Fig. 21 where the second direction defines a generally arcuate path  
11 between the engaged and disengaged positions. Such rotational  
12 movement is effectuated by secondary linkage 865 which pneumatically  
13 engages the finger actuator to effect rotation thereof. As so moved,  
14 the finger assembly swings into a ready position in which a  
15 semiconductor workpiece is ready to be engaged and held for  
16 processing. Once the finger assembly is moved or swung into place  
17 overlapping a workpiece, the preferred finger actuator is spring biased  
18 and released to bear against the workpiece. An engaged workpiece is  
19 shown in Fig. 20 after the workpiece has been engaged by finger tip  
20 854 against a workpiece standoff 865, and spin head assembly 814 has  
21 been rotated back into the position shown in Fig. 15. Such preferred  
22 pneumatically assisted engagement takes place preferably along movement  
23 path axis 864 and in a direction which is into the plane of the page  
24 upon which Fig. 21 appears.

1 As shown in Fig. 18, finger 848 extends away from collet 840 and  
2 preferably includes a bend 866 between collet 840 and finger tip 854.  
3 The preferred bend is a reverse bend of around 180° which serves to  
4 point finger tip 854 toward workpiece *W* when the finger assembly is  
5 moved toward or into the engaged position (Fig. 21). Advantageously,  
6 the collet 840 and hence finger 848 are longitudinally reciprocally  
7 movable into and out of the engaged position.

8

9 Finger Assembly Seal

10 The finger assembly preferably includes a finger assembly seal 868  
11 which is effectuated between finger 848 and a desired workpiece when  
12 the finger assembly is moved into the engaged position. Preferably,  
13 adjacent finger tip 854. A seal 868 is mounted adjacent electrode  
14 contact 858 and effectively seals the electrode contact therewith when  
15 finger assembly 824 is moved to engage a workpiece. The seal can be  
16 made of a suitable flexible, preferably elastomeric material, such as  
17 VITON.

18 More specifically, and referring to Fig. 22, seal 868 can include  
19 a rim portion 870 which engages workpiece surface *W* and forms a  
20 sealing contact therebetween when the finger assembly is moved to the  
21 engaged position. Such seal advantageously isolates finger electrode 860  
22 from the processing environment and materials which may plate out or  
23 otherwise be encountered therein. Seal 868 can be provided with an

1 optional bellows wall structure 894 (Fig. 22), that allows more axial  
2 flexibility of the seal.

3 Fig. 22 shows, in solid lines, seal 868 in a disengaged position in  
4 which rim portion 870 is not engaged with workpiece *W*. Fig. 22 also  
5 shows, in phantom lines, an engaged position in which rim portion 870  
6 is engaged with and forms a seal relative to workpiece *W*. Preferably  
7 and advantageously, electrode contact 858 is maintained in a generally  
8 retracted position within seal 868 when the finger assembly is in the  
9 disengaged position. However, when the finger assembly is moved into  
10 the engaged position, seal 868 and rim portion 870 thereof splay  
11 outwardly or otherwise yieldably deform to effectively enable the  
12 electrode and hence electrode contact 858 to move into the engaged  
13 position against the workpiece. One factor which assists in forming the  
14 preferred seal between the rim portion and the workpiece is the force  
15 which is developed by spring 842 which advantageously urges collet 840  
16 and hence finger 860 and finger tip 858 in the direction of and against  
17 the captured workpiece. Such developed force assists in maintaining the  
18 integrity of the seal which is developed in the engaged position.  
19 Another factor which assists in forming the preferred seal is the  
20 yieldability or deformability of the finger tip when it is brought into  
21 contact with the workpiece. Such factors effectively create a continuous  
22 seal about the periphery of electrode contact 858 thereby protecting it  
23 from any materials, such as the preferred plating materials which are  
24 used during electroplate processing.

## 1      Methods and Operation

2      In accordance with a preferred processing aspect of the present  
3      invention, and in connection with the above-described semiconductor  
4      workpiece holder, a sheathed electrode, such as electrode 860, is  
5      positioned against a semiconductor workpiece surface in a manner which  
6      permits the electrode to impart a voltage bias and current flow to the  
7      workpiece to effectuate preferred electroplating processing of the  
8      workpiece. Such positioning not only allows a desired electrical bias to  
9      be imparted to a held workpiece, but also allows the workpiece itself  
10     to be mechanically held or fixed relative to the workpiece holder. That  
11     is, finger assembly 824 provides an electrical/mechanical connection  
12     between a workpiece and the workpiece holder as is discussed in more  
13     detail below.

14     Electrode 856 includes an electrode tip or electrode contact 858  
15     which engages the workpiece surface. A seal is thus formed about the  
16     periphery of the electrode tip or contact 858 so that a desired electrical  
17     bias may be imparted to the workpiece to enable plating material to  
18     be plated thereon. According to a preferred aspect of the processing  
19     method, the electrode is moved in a first direction, preferably  
20     longitudinally along a movement axis, away from a disengaged position  
21     in which the workpiece surface is not engaged by the electrode tip or  
22     contact 858. Subsequently, the electrode is rotated about the same  
23     movement axis and toward an engaged position in which the electrode  
24     tip may engage, so as to fix, and thereafter bias the workpiece surface.

Such preferred movement is effectuated by pneumatic linkage 825 and pneumatic operator 871 as described above.

According to a preferred aspect of the invention, the seal which is effectuated between the electrode member and the workpiece is formed by utilizing a yieldable, deformable seal member 868 which includes a rim portion 870. The rim portion 870 serves by contacting the workpiece surface to form a continuous seal as shown in Fig. 8. The preferred electrode tip is brought into engagement with the workpiece surface by advancing the electrode tip from a retracted position within the seal or other sheath to an unretracted position in which the workpiece surface is engaged thereby. Such movement of the electrode tip between the retracted and unretracted positions is advantageously accommodated by the yieldable features of the seal 868.

In addition to providing the preferred electrical contact between the workpiece and the electrode tip, the finger assembly also forms a mechanical contact or connection between the assembly and the workpiece which effectively fixes the workpiece relative to the workpiece holder. Such is advantageous because one aspect of the preferred processing method includes rotating the workpiece about rotor axis 822 while the workpiece is exposed to the preferred plating material. Such not only ensures that the electrical connection and hence the electrical bias relative to the workpiece is maintained during processing, but that the mechanical fixation of the workpiece on the workpiece holder is maintained as well.

1        The above described pneumatically effectuated movement of the  
2 preferred finger assemblies between the engaged and disengaged  
3 positions is but one manner of effectuating such movement. Other  
4 manners of effectuating such movement are possible.

5        The invention also includes novel methods for presenting a  
6 workpiece to a semiconductor process. In such methods, a workpiece  
7 is first secured to a workpiece holder. The methods work equally well  
8 for workpiece holders known in the art and for the novel workpiece  
9 holders disclosed herein.

10       In the next step in the sequence, the workpiece holder is rotated  
11 about a horizontal axis from an initial or first position where the  
12 workpiece holder was provided with the workpiece to a second position.  
13 The second position will be at an angle to the horizontal. The angle  
14 of the workpiece holder to the horizontal is defined by the angle  
15 between the plane of the workpiece and the horizontal. In the method,  
16 the workpiece holder is advantageously suspended about a second  
17 horizontal axis which is parallel to the first horizontal axis of the  
18 workpiece holder. At this point in the method, the angle between the  
19 first and second horizontal axes and a horizontal plane corresponds to  
20 the angle between the workpiece holder and the horizontal. The  
21 workpiece holder is then pivoted about the second horizontal axis to  
22 move the workpiece and the workpiece holder from its initial location  
23 to a final location in a horizontal plane. Advantageously, when the  
24

1      workpiece holder is pivoted about the second horizontal axis, the first  
2      horizontal axis also pivots about the second horizontal axis.

3      Preferably, during the step of rotating the workpiece holder about  
4      the first horizontal axis, the angle of the workpiece holder with respect  
5      to some known point, which is fixed with respect to the workpiece  
6      holder during the rotation process, is continually monitored. Monitoring  
7      allows for precise positioning of the workpiece holder with respect to  
8      the horizontal surface.

9      Likewise, during pivoting of the workpiece holder about the  
10     second horizontal axis, it is preferable that the angle defined by the  
11     line connecting the first and second horizontal axes and the horizontal  
12     plane be continually monitored. In this manner, the absolute position  
13     of the workpiece holder (and hence the workpiece itself) will be known  
14     with respect to the horizontal plane. This is important since the  
15     horizontal plane typically will contain the process to which the  
16     workpiece will be exposed.

17     It should be noted that in the above and following description,  
18     while the workpiece is described as being presented to a horizontal  
19     plane, it is possible that the workpiece may also be presented to a  
20     vertical plane or a plane at any angle between the vertical and the  
21     horizontal. Typically, the processing plane will be a horizontal plane  
22     due to the desire to avoid gravitational effects on process fluids to  
23     which the workpiece is exposed. In one embodiment after the  
24     workpiece has been presented to the processing plane, the workpiece

1       holder is rotated about a spin axis to cause the workpiece to spin in  
2       the horizontal plane. Although not required in all semiconductor  
3       manufacturing processes, this is a common step which may be added in  
4       the appropriate circumstance.

5       The next advantageous step in the method consists of pivoting the  
6       workpiece holder about the second horizontal axis back along the path  
7       that the workpiece holder was initially pivoted along when presenting  
8       the workpiece to the horizontal process plane. There is no requirement  
9       that the workpiece holder be pivoted back to the same position whence  
10      it began, although doing so may have certain advantages as more fully  
11      described below.

12      The method advantageously further consists of the step of rotating  
13      the workpiece holder about the first horizontal axis to return the  
14      workpiece to the position when it was initially presented to and engaged  
15      by the workpiece holder. It is advantageous to rotate the workpiece  
16      holder about the first axis in a direction opposite from the initial  
17      rotation of the workpiece holder.

18      The advantage of having the workpiece holder terminate at an  
19      end position which corresponds to the initial position when the  
20      workpiece was loaded into the workpiece holder is efficiency. That is,  
21      additional machine movements are not required to position the  
22      workpiece holder to receive a new workpiece.

23      The method more preferably includes the step of rotating the  
24      workpiece holder about the first horizontal axis at least two support

1 points along the first horizontal axis. This beneficially provides support  
2 and stability to the workpiece holder during the rotation process and  
3 subsequent movement of the apparatus.

4 The method also more preferably includes the step of pivoting the  
5 workpiece holder along with the first horizontal axis about the second  
6 horizontal axis at least two support points along the second horizontal  
7 axis. This beneficially provides additional support for the workpiece  
8 holder while allowing the workpiece holder to be moved in a vertical  
9 or "Z-axis" direction.

10 Importantly, the only motion described in the above method is  
11 rotational motion about several axes. In the method described, there  
12 is no translational motion of the workpiece holder in a X-, Y-, or Z-  
13 axis without corresponding movement in another axis as a result of  
14 rotating through an arc.

15

#### 16 Second Embodiment Processing Station - Generally

17 Fig. 23 shows principal components of a second semiconductor  
18 processing station 900 incorporating features of the invention.  
19 Processing station 900 as shown is specifically adapted and constructed  
20 to serve as an electroplating station similar to electroplating station 400  
21 described hereinabove. To reduce unnecessary replication, only the  
22 principal parts showing differences and features of the invention are  
23 shown and described. Other aspects of the invention are as described  
24 above or can be done in a variety of constructions.

1           The two principal parts of processing station 900 are the  
2           workpiece support assembly 901 and the processing bowl 917. The  
3           workpiece support 401 will be considered first and the processing bowl  
4           and its features will be described in further detail later in this  
5           description. As Fig. 23 indicates, portions of the workpiece support 401  
6           mate with the processing bowl to provide a substantially closed  
7           processing vessel which encloses a substantially enclosed processing or  
8           manufacturing chamber 904.

9

10           **Workpiece Support Generally**

11           The workpiece support processing head holds a wafer W for  
12           rotation within the processing chamber 904. A rotor assembly 984 has  
13           a plurality of workpiece-engaging fingers 979 that hold the wafer against  
14           features of the rotor. Fingers 979 are also preferably adapted to  
15           conduct current between the wafer and a plating electrical power supply  
16           (not shown).

17

18           **Workpiece Support Head Operator**

19           The workpiece support assembly 901 includes a processing head  
20           906 which is supported by an head operator 907. Head operator 907  
21           includes an upper portion 908 which is adjustable in elevation to allow  
22           height adjustment of the processing head. Head operator 907 also has  
23           a head connection shaft 909 which is operable to pivot about a  
24           horizontal pivot axis 910. Pivotal action of the processing head using

operator 907 allows the processing head to be placed in an open or face-up position (not shown) for loading and unloading wafer W. Fig. 23 shows the processing head pivoted into a face-down position in preparation for processing.

A variety of suitable head operators which provide both elevational and horizontal pivoting action are possible for use in this system. The preferred operators are also fitted with positional encoders (not shown) which indicate both the elevation of the processing head and its angular position as pivoted about horizontal head pivot axis 910.

#### Workpiece Support Main Part

Figs. 24 and 25 show additional details of the preferred construction of processing head 906. The processing head includes a main part which moves with and is relatively stationary with respect to the pivot shaft 909. The main part supports a rotating assembly which will be described in greater detail below.

The main part includes a processing head housing 970 and processing head frame 982. The processing head frame 982 includes a door plate 983. A door ring member 984 is joined to plate 983 using suitable fasteners to provide a door assembly which serve as the principal parts covering the upper opening of the processing bowl when the processing head is mated with the bowl.

The processing head frame also includes a frame-pivot shaft connection 985 which includes two mounting rings which receive and

1 securely connect with the processing head pivot shaft 909. Fig. 25  
2 shows that the pivot shaft connection mounting rings are made in two  
3 parts and secured by fasteners (not shown). The pivot shaft connection  
4 base 935 is secured to the door plate 983 using fasteners.

5 Processing head 906 is generally round in shape when viewed in  
6 plan view. The processing head main part includes a housing 970  
7 which has a first housing part 971 and a second housing part or  
8 housing cap 972. The processing head housing 970 encloses a main  
9 part enclosure which surrounds a processing head main part mechanism  
10 chamber 973. Chamber 973 is used to house additional processing head  
11 components, such as the spin motor, the finger actuators, and related  
12 service lines, such as discussed more fully below.

13 The upper surface of the door ring member 984 is provided with  
14 a groove which receives the lower edge of the first housing piece 971.  
15 The outer periphery of the door ring member also advantageously  
16 includes a peripheral groove 986 which mounts an inflatable door  
17 seal 987. Seal 987 seals with portions of the processing bowl to form  
18 a more fluid-tight processing chamber therewithin.

19 The lower surface of the door ring member 984 is preferably  
20 provided with an annular rotor receiving groove 988 which receives top  
21 peripheral portions of the rotor therein in close proximity. This  
22 construction allows a gas purge (not shown) to be applied between the  
23 door and rotor to help prevent processing vapors from migrating behind  
24 the rotor and into to the various mechanisms present in the main part

1 of the processing head. The periphery of the door ring member is  
2 further provided with a chamfered lower edge to facilitate mating with  
3 the processing bowl.

4 The processing head also advantageously includes a moving  
5 assembly in the form of a workpiece holder 978. The workpiece holder  
6 includes fingers 979 for holding a semiconductor workpiece. These  
7 features will be more fully described below.

8

### 9 Workpiece Support Rotor Drive

10 The processing head main part also includes a workpiece holder  
11 drive which moves the workpiece holder relative to the main part of  
12 the processing head. The preferred action is for the workpiece holder  
13 drive to be in the form of a rotor drive which rotates the workpiece  
14 holder. The rotor drive can be an electric motor, pneumatic motor or  
15 other suitable drive. As shown, the processing head includes an electric  
16 workpiece spin motor 980.

17 The drive motor 980 has stator armatures 916 which drive motor  
18 shaft 918 in rotational movement. Drive motor 980 is supported by  
19 bottom motor bearing 921 in bottom motor housing 922. Bottom motor  
20 housing 922 is secured to the main part of the processing head at a  
21 central opening in the door plate 983. Motor 980 is also held in place  
22 by a top motor housing 923. Drive motor 980 is rotationally isolated  
23 from top motor housing 923 by a top motor bearing 927, which is  
24 disposed between the spin motor shaft 918 and the top motor housing.

1 Both motor housings are secured to the processing head frame 982  
2 using fasteners 924 which extend down through the motor housings and  
3 into the door plate 983. The fasteners 924 also extend upwardly  
4 through frame extensions 925. Frame extensions 925 support a top  
5 frame piece 926. Cap 972 is screwed onto piece 926 at mating threads  
6 along the lower interior portion of the cap.

7 The drive motor is preferably an electric motor provided with a  
8 supply of electricity via wiring run through pivot shaft 909 or otherwise  
9 extending to the processing head.

10

### 11 Workpiece Support Rotor Assembly

12 The hollow shaft 918 of the drive motor receives portion of a  
13 rotor assembly therein. The rotor assembly is secured to the motor  
14 shaft and is rotated therewith. Fig. 26 shows major portions of the  
15 rotor assembly in exploded detail. The rotor assembly 930 includes a  
16 rotor shaft 931. Rotor shaft 931 has a rotor shaft hub 932 which is  
17 held within a shaft hub receptacle 933 formed in an inner rotor part  
18 934. The inner or first rotor part 934, also called an inner rotor drive  
19 plate, has a plurality of spokes which extend from the inner rotor part  
20 hub 935 outwardly to connect with a peripheral band 936. The shaft  
21 hub 932 is held in the hub receptacle 933 using a snap-ring 937.

22 The inner rotor part 934 also includes a plurality of receptacles  
23 937. Receptacles 937 are used to mount a plurality of actuator  
24 transmission assemblies 960. The transmission receptacles 937 receive

1 lower portions of the transmission assemblies. The receptacles have  
2 bottom openings through which the finger assemblies 979 (see Fig. 24)  
3 extend and are mounted in the transmission assemblies. Additional  
4 description is provided below in connection with the finger assembly  
5 actuators.

6 Fig. 26 also shows that the rotor assembly 930 preferably includes  
7 a second or outer rotor part 940. The inner and outer rotor parts are  
8 secured together by fasteners 941 (see Fig. 24). The outer rotor part  
9 940 includes a rotor face panel 943 which extends across the  
10 disk-shaped rotor part to form a barrier to processing fluids.

11 The front or exposed side of the outer rotor part is provided  
12 with apertures 787 through which finger actuator transmission shafts 963  
13 extend in supporting relationship for the fingers 979. Workpiece  
14 support standoffs 721 are mounted upon the face of the rotor to  
15 support the back side of the workpieces in opposition to the forces  
16 exerted by the fingers 979. The face of the rotor can also  
17 advantageously be provided with workpiece peripheral guide pins 722 to  
18 facilitate proper location of a wafer upon installation upon the face of  
19 the rotor.

20 Along the back side of the outer rotor part are reinforcing ribs  
21 942 which align with the spokes of the inner rotor part 934. The  
22 reinforcing ribs 942 receive fasteners 941 and connect the two rotor  
23 parts together. At the periphery of the outer rotor part is a side wall  
24 944. The upper or back edge of the peripheral side wall 944 is in

1 close fitting relationship with the door ring 984 at annular groove 988  
2 to resist migration of processing fluids to the back side of the rotor  
3 assembly.

4 The outer rotor part 940 also has an array of bosses 948 at the  
5 peripheral end of the reinforcing ribs 942. Within bosses 948 are  
6 finger passageways 949 which allow the finger assemblies 979 to mount  
7 in the finger actuator transmission assemblies 960. The rotor assembly  
8 also includes the transmission assemblies and finger assemblies.  
9 Additional details of these components as well as additional parts of the  
10 finger actuation mechanisms is described in greater detail below.

11 The rotor shaft 931 fits inside of motor shaft 918 and protrudes  
12 from the top of the shaft and is held by a rotor shaft mounting nut  
13 888. Also mounted near the top of the rotor shaft is an optical  
14 tachometer 499. Optical tachometer 499 is securely attached to motor  
15 shaft 918 and features, such as notches, formed on the tachometer are  
16 optically detected to provide a precise measurement of rotor angular  
17 velocity. The optical emitter-detector couplet used with tachometer 499  
18 are not shown, but are mounted on either sides of the wheel to allow  
19 selective passage of light therethrough.

20 The rotor assembly is also advantageously provided with a angular  
21 position encoder 498. As shown, encoder 498 is mounted to the top  
22 motor housing 923 so as to remain stationary with respect to the main  
23 part of the processing head. The angular position encoder 498 and  
24 optical tachometer 499 allow the speed, acceleration, and precise

1      rotational position of the motor shaft 918 and rotor assembly to be  
2      known and controlled.

3      In one application of the present invention the workpiece support  
4      is used to support a semiconductor workpiece in an electroplating  
5      process. To accomplish the electroplating an electric current is provided  
6      to the workpiece through an alternate embodiment of the fingers  
7      (described more fully below). To provide electric current to the  
8      electrode fingers 979, conductive wires (not shown) are run from the  
9      transmissions 960 toward the hub of the rotor. Current is supplied to  
10     the electrode fingers 979 through the hollow rotor shaft using wires (not  
11     shown) connected to a slip ring electrical connector 687 mounted near  
12     the upper end of shafts 918 and 931.

13

#### 14     Workpiece Detection Subsystem

15     The processing head also preferably includes a wafer or workpiece  
16     detection subsystem. This subsystem allows the processing head to  
17     through its control system to determine whether there is a workpiece  
18     held in the rotor or not. This is of particular significance if the  
19     system experiences a power interruption or otherwise is being started  
20     in any situation where workpieces may be present in the machine.  
21     Operational safeguards can then be included in the control system to  
22     prevent mishandling of wafers or processing stations which may have a  
23     workpiece held therein.

1       As shown in Fig. 25, the processing head frame part 983 is  
2       provided with a mounting 738 which is an appropriately shaped recess  
3       used to mount a detector 739. Detector 739 is preferably an optical  
4       emitter-detector unit which emits a beam which passes downwardly as  
5       oriented in Fig. 25. The emitted beam passes through workpiece  
6       detector windows 741 (see Fig. 26) formed in the face panel of the  
7       outer rotor part. The windows can be discrete inserts, or more  
8       preferably, they are thinly dimensioned panel portions of the rotor face  
9       panel 943. The rotor face panel is advantageously made of a material  
10      which is transmissive of the detector beam being used. For example,  
11      the panel can be made from polyvinylidene fluoride polymer which is  
12      thinned to a suitably thin dimension, such as in the approximate range  
13      from about 1-5 millimeters.

14       A suitable detector 739 is a Sunx brand model RX-LS200, and  
15      other commercially available detectors. The preferred detector uses an  
16      infrared beam emitter (not individually shown) which is detected by a  
17      pair of beam detectors (not individually shown). The beam emitter and  
18      beam detectors are preferably part of the same unit which serves as the  
19      workpiece detector. The workpiece detector preferably operated in a  
20      trigonometric mode. In the trigonometric mode, the angle of the  
21      reflected beam is an important discriminating parameter. Thus any  
22      portion of the beam reflected by the detector window 741 is incident  
23      upon the pair of detectors at a reflection angle which is outside of the  
24      normal detection angle range. Such portions of the beam reflected by

1 the window 741 are thus minimized and the detector is not triggered  
2 by such reflectance. Instead, the pair of beam detectors are adjusted  
3 to sense a reflected beam which is incident at a reflected angle  
4 associated with the wafer or other workpiece surface which is more  
5 distant than the window. When there is no workpiece held in the  
6 workpiece holder, then the detector senses the absence and this is used  
7 by the control system as an indication that there is no wafer present  
8 in the wafer support.

9 In general the emitted infrared beam used in the preferred  
10 workpiece detector subsystem is sufficient to detect the presence of a  
11 wafer or other semiconductor workpiece held in a stationary position  
12 with the rotor positioned so that one of the windows 741 is in position  
13 aligned to allow the emitted beam to pass therethrough and be reflected  
14 by the workpiece back through the window for detection. The detection  
15 system described herein is not sufficient to allow detection during  
16 rotation of the rotor and any workpiece held thereon. The invention  
17 may also be practiced in a situation where sensing can be accomplished  
18 while the rotor rotates.

19 The workpiece detector arrangement shown has the distinct benefit  
20 of being mounted wholly behind the rotor face panel without provision  
21 of any openings which might allow processing fluids to enter the space  
22 behind the rotor. This reduces maintenance, improves reliability, and  
23 simplifies construction costs.

24

## Workpiece Support Finger Actuator

The preferred wafer support also includes a plurality of wafer-engaging fingers 979 positioned about the periphery of the wafer or other workpiece. Fig. 27 shows the front face of the outer rotor part 940 in a face-up orientation with fingers 979 extending therefrom. The preferred fingers are J-shaped and mounted for pivotal action about a finger pivot axes 953. The pivotal action preferably ranges between an outboard position and an inboard position. In the outboard position the J-shaped fingers are positioned outwardly and clear of the wafer peripheral edge. A preferred outboard position is illustrated in Fig. 27. In the outboard position the hooked portions of the J-shaped fingers are oriented at approximately 15 angular degrees outward from a line drawn tangent to the periphery of the wafer adjacent to the finger. In the inboard position the fingers are positioned inwardly to engage the wafer, as shown in Fig. 28. In the inboard position the hooked portions of the J-shaped fingers are oriented at approximately 45 angular degrees inward from a line drawn tangent to the periphery of the wafer adjacent to the finger.

19 The face of the rotor assembly is provided with workpiece  
20 standoff supports 721 which are in complementary position to the  
21 engagement ends of the fingers when the fingers are in a retracted  
22 position to hold the wafer. This construction securely captures the  
23 wafer or other workpiece between the fingers and the standoffs.

1           In addition to the pivotal action of the engagement fingers, the  
2           fingers are also move axially toward and away from the face of the  
3           rotor. In the inboard position the fingers are retracted toward the  
4           wafer to engage the exposed, front face of the wafer along a marginal  
5           band adjacent to the periphery of the wafer. In the outboard position  
6           the fingers are extended away from the face of the wafer to prevent  
7           rubbing action as the fingers pivot away from the wafer. This  
8           compound action including both a pivot component and an axial  
9           component is accomplished using a finger actuator transmission 960  
10          shown in perspective relationship to the rotor in Fig. 26. Transmissions  
11          960 are mounted within the transmission receptacles 937 of the inner  
12          rotor part 934. The transmissions are further mounted by transmission  
13          retainers 951 which are secured by fasteners to inner rotor part 934.

14          Fig. 29 shows the finger actuator transmission 960 in greater  
15          detail. The lower end of transmission 960 includes a finger head  
16          mounting receptacle 954. Receptacle 954 is advantageously provided  
17          with a locking feature included to secure the fingers in the receptacles.  
18          As shown, the receptacle includes a convoluted, bayonet-type, locking pin  
19          groove 955. Locking pin groove 955 receives a transversely mounted  
20          finger mounting pin 956 (see Fig. 32) which is a rolled or other  
21          suitable pin secured in the head of the finger assembly.

22          Figs. 29, 30, and 31 detail the preferred construction of the  
23          actuator transmissions 960. The transmissions include a transmission  
24          base 961 which is provided with a mounting cutout 962 which is borne

1 upon by the retainers 951 when installed in the rotor. The base also  
2 includes a central passageway within which is received a transmission  
3 shaft 963. Shaft 963 can both pivot and move axially within the  
4 central passageway. The shaft and base 961 are constructed to interact  
5 in a manner which controls the relative motion of the shaft. This is  
6 done to provide the compound pivotal and axial movement of the shaft  
7 and a finger 979 which is held therein. As shown, the inactive  
8 mechanism is provided in the form of a shaft channel or groove 964  
9 which is engaged by a shaft camming control member 965. The  
10 camming action of the groove is provided by a helical advance over a  
11 pivotal movement range of approximately 60 degrees of rotation. The  
12 associate axial travel is in the range of approximately 5-20 millimeters,  
13 more preferably about 10-15 millimeters.

14 The camming control member 965 is advantageously in the form  
15 of a ball 966 held into the groove 964 using a ball support fastener  
16 967. Fastener 967 has a ball socket which receives portions of the  
17 ball. Fastener 967 also serves as a convenient electrical contact  
18 terminal when electricity is supplied to the fingers 979.

19 The shaft 963 is provided with an interior shaft passageway 968  
20 which receives a spring retainer 969. Spring retainer 969 has an  
21 engagement head which mechanically engages with a finger mounting  
22 spring 938. The spring 938 serves to bias a finger assembly into a  
23 locked position using the locking pin 956 held in biased relationship by  
24

1 groove 955. Spring retainer 969 is secured in the passageway by a set  
2 screw 939.

3 Fig. 31 also shows that the transmission 960 preferably includes  
4 a transmission head 656. Transmission head 656 is connected to the  
5 upper end of shaft 963 using a bearing 657 which allows the shaft to  
6 pivot relative to the head pieces 658 and 659. Head pieces 658 and  
7 659 capture the bearing between them, and are joined by head fasteners  
8 660. The head fasteners 660 thread into a pair of head guide rods  
9 661. Head guide rods 661 are slidably received by two guide  
10 passageways 662 formed in the transmission base 961. The head  
11 assembly is biased upwardly by two head bias springs 664. Engagement  
12 between ball 966 and groove 964 limits the upward movement of the  
13 head assembly under action by springs 664.

14 The lower end of shaft 963 is sealed to the base 961 using a  
15 shaft seal 667 which helps to keep any abraded metal within the  
16 transmission and prevent contamination toward the fingers 979. Shaft  
17 963 also has a transverse hole 665 which is used as an electrical  
18 connection feature that receives a wire (not shown) run from the slip  
19 ring down the rotor shaft. The wire is secured in hole 665 by a set  
20 screw (not shown).

21 The transmissions 960 are activated by a transmission head  
22 depression ring 683 (see Fig. 24). Depression ring 683 is connected to  
23 an operator output connection ring 684 (see Fig. 25). The operator  
24 output connection ring is secured by fasteners to the output shafts of

1      pneumatic actuator engines 691. Fig. 25 also shows pneumatic manifolds  
2      692 used to supply the actuator engines. The preferred construction  
3      shows three actuator engines 691 which have outputs which move  
4      upwardly and downwardly to depress the transmission heads 658 and  
5      operate the fingers in the compound axial and pivotal motion already  
6      described. The actuator engine outputs are extended to depress rings  
7      683 and 684, and to depress the transmission heads 658 thus causing  
8      the fingers 979 to move from the inboard retracted positions of Fig. 28  
9      to the outboard extended positions of Fig. 27.

10

11      **Electrode Fingers With Submerged Conductive Current Transfer Areas**

12      Figs. 32-39 show a number of different electrode finger  
13      constructions. The different constructions shown have particular  
14      application to differing applications. Fig. 32 shows a finger assembly  
15      631 having intended application for contacting a semiconductor wafer  
16      during blanket plating of copper. Finger assembly 631 includes a finger  
17      shaft 632 which is formed in a J-shape and made from an electrically  
18      conductive material, such as stainless steel or tungsten. The finger  
19      assembly also preferably includes an integral finger head 633 which is  
20      received into the receptacle 954 of the actuator transmission 960. The  
21      head has a pin aperture which receives the locking pin 956 therein for  
22      engagement with the locking groove 955 formed in the receptacle of the  
23      actuator transmission.

1 Finger assembly 631 also preferably includes dielectric sheathing  
2 634 and 635. Dielectric sheathing 634 and 635 is advantageously made  
3 from a polyvinylidene fluoride coating or layer applied to the shaft of  
4 the finger. The dielectric sheathing is preferably provided upon only  
5 limited portions of the electrode shaft and adjacent the contact head  
6 636. The contact head has a contact face 637 which directly bears  
7 upon the wafer to pass electrical current between the electrode and  
8 wafer. The contact face 637 is approximately equal to a fluid  
9 submersion boundary 639. The submersion boundary indicates the  
10 approximate level of the plating liquid during processing.

11 The limited coverage of the dielectric sheathing is for the purpose  
12 of improving the uniformity of plating performed upon semiconductor  
13 workpieces held in the wafer support. It is believed that the  
14 submersible surfaces of the electrode finger are best provided with  
15 dielectric sheathing segments which comprise between approximately 25  
16 percent and 75 percent of the submersible area of the electrode.  
17 These amounts do not consider the contact face as part of the areas.  
18 Fig. 32 show two segments 634 and 635 which cover about 50 percent  
19 of the electrode finger shaft exterior surfaces from the submersion line  
20 639 downward, as positioned in a plating liquid bath during processing.  
21 The first dielectric segment 634 is adjacent to the contact face 637.  
22 a first electrically conductive segment 642 exists between the dielectric  
23 segment 634 and the contact face 637. A second electrically conductive  
24 segment 643 exists between first and second dielectric segments 634 and

1       635. A third electrically conductive segment 644 exists between the  
2 second dielectric segment 635 and submersion line 639. The electrically  
3 conductive segments 642-644 provide current transfer areas which cause  
4 plating current that is supplied through the finger head 633 to be  
5 directly passed to the plating liquid contained in a plating bath. This  
6 is believed to provide a more uniform current density and more uniform  
7 voltage profile across the surface of a wafer which is being blanket  
8 plated with copper or other plating metals.

9       Fig. 33 shows another plating system workpiece support electrode  
10 651 having many of the same features as electrode 631 described  
11 immediately above. The same reference numerals have been used to  
12 designate similar parts. Differences between finger electrodes 651 and  
13 631 will now be described. Electrode 651 has three current transfer  
14 areas 642-644. The size and shape of areas 642-644 are somewhat  
15 different from the corresponding areas of electrode 631. More  
16 specifically, the second and third current transfer areas 643 and 644 are  
17 elongated along the shaft. The second dielectric sheath segment 635  
18 is shortened. A third dielectric segment 653 has been included. The  
19 third dielectric sheath 654 forms the submerged dielectric segment 653  
20 and also extends above the submersion line 639 to head 633. The area  
21 of the submerged current transfer segments is between 25 and 75  
22 percent of the submerged surface area, more particularly, about 50  
23 percent.

1           Electrode 651 is also provided with a distal contact insert part  
2        655. Insert part 655 is received within an insert receptacle 616 formed  
3        in the distal end of the electrode shaft. The insert contact tip 655  
4        defines a contact face 617 which bears upon a wafer being held. The  
5        insert contact part is made from a conductive material which is  
6        preferably non-corrosive material, such as platinum or stainless steel.

7           Fig. 34 shows a further electrode finger construction in the form  
8        of electrode finger 979. Similar parts to electrode fingers 631 and 651  
9        are similarly numbered in this figure. The electrode shaft is covered  
10       by a dielectric sheath 621 which largely covers the electrode shaft and  
11       leaves only a first current conductive area 642 which is immediately  
12       adjacent to the contact face 637. This construction is contrasted to the  
13       electrodes 631 and 651 because electrode finger 979 does not have  
14       current transfer areas which comprise 25 percent of the submerged  
15       portion of the electrode. It also does not have current transfer areas  
16       which are exposed in a manner which is separated by a dielectric  
17       segment interpositioned between the contact face 637 and the removed  
18       or remote current conductive segment.

19           Fig. 35 shows a further electrode finger 601 which has submerged  
20        current transfer areas 642-644. It also has dielectric segments 634 and  
21        635. Dielectric segment 635 of this figure has a differing shape and  
22        coverage area as compared to the other electrodes discussed above. In  
23        this construction the dielectric sheath extends along the outer curvature  
24        of the electrode J-bend. Curved upper edges extend so as to provide

1        an overlying web portion 603 which covers the inner curvature of the  
2        J-bend. Performance in terms of plating uniformity has been found to  
3        be superior in some processes which employed the electrode of this  
4        figure.

5        The electrodes 631, 651 and 601 are preferably used in novel  
6        processes according to this invention. These processes include contacting  
7        a surface of the semiconductor article or workpiece with an electrode  
8        at a contact face thereof. The methods also include submersing a  
9        portion or portions of the electrode into a plating bath containing a  
10       plating liquid which is typically a solution and mixture have various  
11       components known in the art. The methods also preferably include  
12       wetting a processed surface of the semiconductor article with the plating  
13       bath. Further included is the step of moving or conducting electrical  
14       current through the electrode and plating bath to perform an  
15       electroplating action to occur upon at least the processed surface of the  
16       wafer or other article. The methods further advantageously include  
17       diverting a portion of the electrical current directly between the  
18       electrode and the plating bath along at least one electrically conductive  
19       segment of the electrode. The electrically conductive segment is  
20       preferably spaced from the contact face a substantial distance, such as  
21       greater than 5 millimeters, and preferably is spaced therefrom by an  
22       intervening dielectric sheath.

1      Electrode Fingers With Dielectric Sheaths Covering Submerged Areas

2      Fig. 36 shows another electrode finger 681 which is similar to  
3      electrode finger 651. Finger 681 is similar to finger 651 except it  
4      includes a full dielectric sheath 682 which extends from above  
5      submersion line 639 to contact insert side walls 619. This construction  
6      preferably uses a coating layer 682, such as from polyvinylidene fluoride,  
7      which can be applied by dipping or otherwise forming the layer over  
8      the shaft of the electrode. This construction includes the dielectric  
9      layer over the distal end of the electrode shaft and into sealing  
10     relationship with the side walls of the insert contact part or tip 655.  
11     The dielectric coating or other layer 682 excludes corrosive processing  
12     fluids. Since the contact tip is preferably made from a non-corrosive  
13     material, such as platinum, the only material of the electrode which is  
14     exposed to direct corrosive action is the non-corrosive tip which is able  
15     to maintain good service despite the difficult operating environment.

16     Additionally, the construction of electrode 681 is particularly  
17     advantageous because the joint formed between the inserted contact tip  
18     655 and receptacle 616 is covered and protected from direct exposure  
19     to the corrosive plating liquid and fumes present in the processing  
20     chamber.

21     The invention further includes methods for plating metals onto the  
22     surface of a semiconductor workpiece using electrode finger 681. The  
23     methods include contacting a surface of the workpiece with an electrode  
24     assembly using a contact face, such as face 617, on a contact part, such

1 as contact insert part 655. The contact insert is mounted on the distal  
2 end of the electrode shaft. It is further preferably provided with a  
3 dielectric layer formed about the distal end in sealing relationship  
4 against the contact part. The methods further preferably include  
5 submersing or otherwise wetting a processed surface of the workpiece,  
6 such as in a plating bath liquid used to plate the workpiece with a  
7 plating material. The methods also preferably include excluding the  
8 plating bath liquified from the contact part joint, such as the joint  
9 formed between the contact part 655 and receptacle 616. The methods  
10 further include electroplating the workpiece with plating material by  
11 passing electrical current through the contact part and between the  
12 semiconductor workpiece and electrode assembly. The contact face  
13 plating layer is more preferably formed from the plating material as is  
14 described below in additional detail. The method is most preferably  
15 used to plate copper onto the surface of semiconductor materials, such  
16 as silicon or oxides thereof.

17

18 **Pre-Conditioning of Electrode Contact Faces**

19 Figs. 37 and 38 illustrates a further electrode construction in  
20 accordance with further inventive aspects of the workpiece support  
21 systems and methods described herein. Fig. 37 shows distal end  
22 portions of an electrode 614. Electrode 614 is otherwise similar to  
23 electrode 681 described above. At the distal end of electrode finger  
24 614 is a distal exposed surface 615 is made from a suitable material,

1 such as stainless steel or tungsten. A dielectric sheath 616 is  
2 advantageously provided along the exterior portions of the electrode  
3 adjacent to the distal exposed surface 615.

4 Fig. 38 shows the electrode 614 with a deposited contact face  
5 plating layer 618 formed thereon. The layer 618 is preferably a layer  
6 made from the same or a very similar material as is being plated onto  
7 the semiconductor workpieces with which electrode 614 is to be used.  
8 For example, if copper is being plated onto the semiconductor device,  
9 then the layer 618 is a layer plated from the same plating bath or  
10 from a plating bath which will provide a layer 618 which is the same  
11 or very similar to the constituency of the copper deposited onto the  
12 semiconductor device being plated. In a preferred manner of carrying  
13 out this invention, the exposed distal surfaces 615 are placed into a  
14 plating bath and electrical current is conducted through the bath and  
15 distal end of the electrode 614. This causes a plating action to occur  
16 which deposits the layer 618. The resulting layer is preferably at least  
17 1 micron in thickness, more preferably in the approximate range of 1-  
18 100 microns thick.

19 This method and resulting construction results in a pre-conditioned  
20 electrode contact surface which is of the same or very similar material  
21 as plated onto the semiconductor device during the later plating  
22 operation. The use of the same or similar materials prevents galvanic  
23 or other types of chemical reactions from developing due to dissimilarity  
24 of the metals involved.

1        The invention further includes additional methods for plating  
2        metals onto the surface of a semiconductor workpiece. The preferred  
3        methods include contacting a surface of the semiconductor workpiece  
4        with an electrode at a contact face forming a part of the electrode.  
5        The contact face is covered or substantially covered by a contact face  
6        plating layer. The contact face plating layer is formed from a contact  
7        face plating material which is the same or chemically similar to the  
8        plating material which is to be plated onto the semiconductor workpiece  
9        during processing. The methods also preferably include submersing or  
10       otherwise wetting a processed surface of the workpiece into a plating  
11       bath or using a plating liquid or fluid. Other means for depositing the  
12       plating material as a contact face layer may alternatively be used. The  
13       methods further include electroplating workpiece plating material onto  
14       the semiconductor workpiece by passing electrical current between the  
15       workpiece and the electrode having such contact face plating layer.  
16       The methods are of particular advantage in the plating of copper onto  
17       semiconductors using a copper contact face plating layer.  
18

19       **Methods Using Workpiece-Engaging Electrode Assembly With Sealing Boot**

20       Fig. 39 shows a further electrode finger 583 which has features  
21       similar to 651 and such similar features are identified with the same  
22       reference numbers. Electrode finger 583 differs from finger 651 in that  
23       the electrode shaft 584 is covered between the head 633 to the distal  
24       end of the electrode shaft with a cover or boot 585. Boot 585 is

1 preferably made in a manner which provides a continuous cover from  
2 near the electrode head 633 to a distal contact lip 586. The boot  
3 includes additional features adjacent the contact insert part 655. More  
4 specifically, the boot includes a skirt portion 587 which extends above  
5 the electrode shaft distal end surface 588. The contact face 617 of the  
6 insert part 655 is preferably about even with the distal contact lip 586  
7 which is formed upon the end of the skirt portion 587. The skirt  
8 portion serves as a deformable seal which comes into contact with a  
9 surface of a wafer or other semiconductor workpiece being contacted.

10 Figs. 40 and 41 illustrate novel methods which advantageously  
11 utilize the improved features of electrode finger 583. The methods  
12 involve plating metals onto the surface of semiconductor workpieces,  
13 specifically onto a semiconductor wafer W which has a substrate or  
14 other subjacent layer 561 which has been previously provided with a  
15 thin metallic seed layer 562 which is shown by a heavy black line in  
16 that figure. A via or other opening 563 exists in a photoresist layer  
17 564 which overlies the substrate and seed layers.

18 Fig. 40 shows the electrode 583 poised in a disengaged position  
19 in preparation for contact with the surface. Fig. 41 shows the electrode  
20 583 retracted against the surface of the workpiece. In the engaged  
21 position the contact face 617 is extended through the opening 563 and  
22 into direct electrical contact with exposed areas of the seed layer 562  
23 which are not covered by the layer of photoresist or other covering

24

1       layer. A seal is formed by depressing the skirt 587 and attached lip  
2       586 against the outer surface of the photoresist layer 564.

3       The novel methods include selecting an electrode assembly having  
4       desired features, such the features of electrode finger 583. More  
5       specifically, the selecting step preferably includes selecting an electrode  
6       assembly having an electrode contact which is surrounded by an  
7       electrode boot or other sealing member. The methods also include  
8       engaging coated surface portions, such as photoresist layer 564, with the  
9       sealing member or boot. The sealing can occur about a continuous  
10      peripheral sealing line, such as defined by the engagement of lip 586  
11      against the photoresist surface. It is important to engage the lip  
12      against the photoresist surface and not against the seed layer 562  
13      because sealing against the seed layer can cause erosive or corrosive  
14      effects to occur at or near the line or area of engagement of the boot  
15      with the seed layer. Such erosive or corrosive actions can cause the  
16      seed layer to become discontinuous or even totally isolated. A  
17      discontinuous or isolated contact region will lead to electroplating failure  
18      because the needed current will not be communicated in an even  
19      manner to the areas adjacent to the electrode which need current to  
20      accomplish plating. The engagement of the seal against the coating  
21      causes a sealed space to be enclosed within the seal by the electrode  
22      boot and the processed surface of the workpiece.

23      The novel methods further include enclosing a via or other  
24      opening within the seal. The via is present on the processed surface

1 and has associated exposed seed layer portions therein for allowing  
2 electrical contact to be made. The via is needed to allow direct  
3 contact between the contact face of the electrode finger assembly and  
4 the seed layer which is used to communicate electrical current across  
5 the wafer for electroplating a metal thereonto. Thus, the methods  
6 further include contacting the seed layer through the via with the  
7 electrode contact to form an electrically conductive connection between  
8 the electrode assembly and the seed layer. This contacting step is  
9 advantageously performed using a contact face which bears upon the  
10 seed layer and is enclosed with the sealed space. Other desirable  
11 attributes explained hereinabove in connection with other electrodes can  
12 also be utilized to advantage in performing this process.

13 The methods still further include wetting the processed surface of  
14 the workpiece with a plating or other processing liquid. This is  
15 typically done by lowering the wafer holder into position to bring the  
16 outer, processed surface of the wafer into direct contact with a plating  
17 liquid held in a plating bath, such as described elsewhere herein in  
18 additional detail.

19 The methods also preferably include passing electrical current  
20 through the electrode and plating bath to cause electroplating to occur  
21 upon exposed seed layer areas of the processed surface. Such exposed  
22 seed layer areas may be trenches, vias or other features where the  
23 photoresist layer 564 is not present to cover the seed layer 562. The  
24

1       electrical current causes electroplating to occur on such exposed seed  
2       layer areas.

3       Still further, the methods preferably include excluding plating or  
4       other processing liquid from the sealed space to substantially reduce or  
5       eliminate plating or other action in the area immediate adjacent to the  
6       contact with the electrode.

7       The methods described above are of particular relevance to plating  
8       copper onto semiconductors.

9

10      Plating Bowl Assembly

11      Fig. 42 shows an electroplating bowl assembly 303. The process  
12     bowl assembly consists of a process bowl or plating vessel 316 having  
13     an outer bowl side wall 617, bowl bottom 319, and bowl rim assembly  
14     314. The process bowl is preferably circular in horizontal cross-section  
15     and generally cylindrical in shape although other shapes of process bowl  
16     may be possible.

17      The invention further advantageously includes a cup assembly 320  
18     which is disposed within process bowl vessel 316. Cup assembly 320  
19     includes a fluid cup portion 321 having a cup side 322 and a cup  
20     bottom 323. As with the outer process bowl, the fluid cup 321 is  
21     preferably circular in horizontal cross-section and cylindrical in shape.  
22     The cup assembly also has a depending skirt 371 which extends below  
23     the cup bottom 323 and has flutes 372 open therethrough for fluid  
24     communication and release of any gas that might collect as the chamber

1 below fills with liquid. The cup assembly can be made using upper  
2 and lower portions which couple together at a cup main joint 387.  
3 The cup is preferably made from polypropylene or other suitable  
4 material, which is advantageously dielectric.

5 The lower opening in the cup bottom wall is connected to a riser  
6 tube 361 which is adjustable in height relative thereto by a threaded  
7 connection. The riser tube seals between the bottom wall 319 of the  
8 process bowl and the cup bottom 323. The riser tube is preferably  
9 made from polypropylene or other suitable dielectric material. A fitting  
10 362 connects the riser tube 361 and the fluid inlet line 325 to allow  
11 adjustment of the anode vertical position. The fitting 362 can  
12 accommodate height adjustment of both the riser tube and inlet line  
13 325. The inlet line is made from a conductive material, such as  
14 titanium and is used to conduct electrical current to the anode 324, as  
15 well as supply fluid to the cup.

16 Process fluid is provided to the cup through fluid inlet line 325.  
17 The fluid inlet line rises through riser tube 361 and bowl bottom  
18 opening 327 and through cup fluid inlet openings 324. Plating fluid fills  
19 the cup portion 321 through opening 324 as supplied by a plating fluid  
20 pump (not shown) or other suitable supply which provides the fluid  
21 under at least some pressure for delivery.

22 The upper edge of the cup side wall 322 forms a weir which  
23 determines the level of plating liquid within the cup. Excess fluid  
24 pours over this top edge surface into the overflow chamber 345. The

1 fluid held in the overflow chamber 345 is sensed by two level detectors  
2 351 and 352. One level detector is used to sense a desired high level  
3 and the other is used to sense an overfull condition. The level of  
4 liquid is preferably maintained within a desired range for stability of  
5 operation. This can be done using several different outflow  
6 configurations. A preferred configuration is to sense the high level  
7 using detector 351 and then drain fluid through a drain line as  
8 controlled by a control valve. It is also possible to use a standpipe  
9 arrangement (not illustrated), and such is used as a final overflow  
10 protection device in the preferred plating station 303. More complex  
11 level controls are also possible.

12 The outflow liquid from chamber 345 is preferably returned to a  
13 suitable reservoir. The liquid can then be treated with additional  
14 plating chemicals or other constituents of the plating or other process  
15 liquid and used again.

16 The plating bowl assembly 303 further includes an anode 334  
17 In the preferred uses according to this invention, the anode is a  
18 consumable anode used in connection with the plating of copper or  
19 other metals onto semiconductor materials. The specific anode will vary  
20 depending upon the metal being plated and other specifics of the  
21 plating liquid being used. A number of different consumable anodes  
22 which are commercially available may be used as anode 334.

23 Fig. 42 also shows a diffusion plate 375 provided above the anode  
24 334 for rendering the fluid plating bath above the diffusion plate with

1 less turbulence. Fluid passages are provided over all or a portion of  
2 the diffusion plate to allow fluid communication therethrough. The  
3 height of the diffusion plate is adjustable using three diffuser height  
4 adjustment mechanisms 386 and secured by three mounting  
5 fasteners 389.

6

#### 7 Plating Anode Shield

8 -- The invention also includes an anode shield 393 which can be  
9 secured to the consumable anode 334 using anode shield fasteners 394.  
10 The anode shield and anode shield fasteners are preferably made from  
11 a dielectric material, such as polyvinylidene fluoride or polypropylene.  
12 The anode shield is advantageously about 2-5 millimeters thick, more  
13 preferably about 3 millimeters thick.

14 The anode shield serves to electrically isolate and physically  
15 protect the back side of the anode. It also reduces the consumption  
16 of organic plating liquid additives consumed. Although the exact  
17 mechanism may not be known at this time, the anode shield is believed  
18 to prevent disruption of certain materials which develop over time on  
19 the back side of the anode. If the anode is left unshielded the  
20 organic chemical plating additives are consumed at a significantly greater  
21 rate. With the shield in place these additive are consumed less. The  
22 shield is preferably positioned on the anode so as to shield it from  
23 direct impingement by the incoming plating liquid.

24

1        The invention thus also include methods for plating which include  
2        other method steps described herein in combination with shielding a  
3        consumable anode from direct flow of plating liquids using a dielectric  
4        anode shield.

5        ,  
6        In compliance with the statute, the invention has been described  
7        in language more or less specific as to structural and methodical  
8        features. It is to be understood, however, that the invention is not  
9        limited to the specific features shown and described, since the means  
10      herein disclosed comprise preferred forms of putting the invention into  
11      effect. The invention is, therefore, claimed in any of its forms or  
12      modifications within the proper scope of the appended claims  
13      appropriately interpreted in accordance with the doctrine of equivalents.

14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24